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The Marriage Issue

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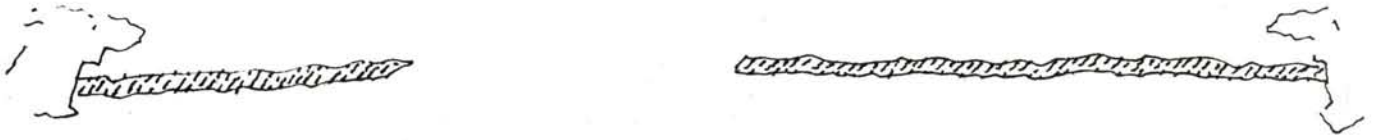

R.O. BLECHMAN

GOING TO THE CHAPEL... OR NOT

Cambridge, Mass.

■ Thank you for John Scagliotti's "Straight, Not Narrow" [May 31]. My partner of three years and I, though heterosexual, decided a year ago that we will not get married until we see a Supreme Court ruling that guarantees reciprocity among states in recognizing same-sex marriages, assuring our homosexual friends the same civil rights we enjoy. In addition, in any year when, if married, we would have paid a marriage penalty, the amount of that penalty will be donated to an organization fighting for marriage equality. We hope that other heterosexual couples will take a stand—by contributing monetarily, by postponing their nuptials or, as Scagliotti did, by abstaining from the nuptials of heterosexual friends. Together, we can challenge people to think hard about whether marriage is a right that should depend on one's sexual orientation.

CYNTHIA PERRY AND DUSTIN CAMPBELL

Cleburne, Tex.

■ John Scagliotti is so right. I live with the same problem here in Texas, but mine is more complex. I have two wives whom I love and, after twelve years of marriage, have six children with. We view ourselves as able to make our own decision about marriage, but the law will not allow us to be married because of its prejudice. We, too, will have our rights. Keep up the good fight. BILL RODEN

Clarksville, Tenn.

■ I have no problem with gay marriage. I feel that if a couple share a home, a life, maybe raise children together, go to work, pay bills, take out the trash and manage to stay together in today's world, more power to them. Many of us heteros aren't doing so well, so who are we to throw stones? And who are insurance companies, employers or government to say theirs isn't a valid relationship? I say their long-term relationship helps me and my relationship by fostering the family and love. How can you beat that? LAUREL HENDERSON

BUT HE *LOVED* HIS MOTHER...

Santa Fe

■ As one who has tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully for the past twenty-five years to obtain access to Allen Weinstein's source papers for *Perjury* and *The Haunted Wood*, I would like to cite a specific example of his attitude toward making such data available to concerned scholars in a timely manner [Jon Wiener, "The Archives and Allen Weinstein," May 17].

In a letter to William Buckley Jr., reproduced in Buckley's book *Windfall*, Sam Tanenhaus, a biographer of Whittaker Chambers, describes a visit of his to Weinstein's home in Washington to review the *Perjury* materials, after being recommended to Weinstein by Buckley. "A.W. is, I saw, Oedipus, doomed to solve tragic riddles. At one point, he said, 'I haven't touched this stuff for years. It follows me—people call, ask questions—I try to avoid them'"—hardly a qualification to become the national archivist by any reasonable criteria. JAMES W. HAMILTON

IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

Oakland, Calif.

■ *The Nation* has taken the lead in liberal Democratic Party circles in opposing Ralph Nader's independent candidacy and the Greens' running a presidential slate. It seems that *The Nation*'s candidate is John Kerry and it hopes to help him win by silencing anyone who truly opposes Bush's policies. It urges a vote for Kerry, who voted for the Patriot Act, for "unequivocal support" of the Iraq war, who opposes the World Court, opposes the Kyoto Protocol and so on.

The editors want to help Kerry win by preventing any candidate from running who is for peace and democracy. So those who disagree with *The Nation* have no choice, no one to vote for. This reflects tremendous arrogance toward American voters because it is essentially the voters whose rights they would deny. They want to force these voters to vote against what they believe. To justify this policy, the editors hide behind the undemocratic, winner-take-all, no-runoff electoral laws. And these undemocratic electoral policies are fully supported by their candidate and party, Kerry and the Democrats (see www.avocadoeducationproject.org).

The Nation has joined the chorus of those blaming Nader for Bush's selection. Seven million Democrats voted for Bush in 2000, more than 200,000 in Florida alone. We are still looking for one Green who voted for Bush. The Democratic Party campaign blaming Nader for Bush is a transparent attempt to teach our citizens who question the two-party system that they must not dare challenge these two corporate parties. "It's either the Democrats or you get a Republican," they are told. "Learn to submit to the rule of money. If you challenge them it only gets worse. Remain silent and accept whatever the Democrats give you!"

The Nation's hostility toward the Green Party is reflected in its coverage, for example, of the gubernatorial recall election in California. For the first time, a party to the left of the Democrats, the Green Party, was included in nationally televised debates. In the eight months of the recall election, *The Nation* avoided any mention of the Green Party or its candidate, myself. All the major papers across the country and every mainstream TV station reported on all six "major" candidates. But like Stalin's servile editors, *The Nation* carefully edited out the Green candidate from its cover story ["California Chaos," Sept. 1/8, 2003], which showed pictures of all the major candidates minus the Green.

When historians look back, they will marvel at how presenting candidates who will fight for democracy and peace in the 2004 elections was opposed by so many who claimed to support those goals. Just as today we look back in disgust when, 130 years ago, *The Nation*, in a different context, opposed rights for African-Americans, whom it called "the least civilized race in the world." PETER MIGUEL CAMEJO

THE EDITORS REPLY

■ Peter Camejo has many strong opinions—for which we admire him—a few of which are even correct. Others are not. It is misleading to describe our coverage of the Green Party as scanty or hostile or to say we support the major-party duopoly. A glance at our archives reveals extensive reporting on Greens, including this mention of Camejo, from Marc Cooper ("California's Gray Politics," Aug. 19/26, 2002): "With the two major-party candidates inspiring little excitement or loyalty, the November election ought to be fertile territory for third-party movements like the California Green Party. But while recent statewide polls show a surge of support for third-party contenders, Green gubernatorial candidate Peter Camejo, a Marxist-Leninist turned socially responsible investment banker, has yet to emerge from anonymity; his support is estimated at no more than 4 or 5 percent."

We're sorry Camejo found us insufficiently enthusiastic about his candidacy during the recall fight. We tended to focus on which candidate would capture the governor's office in Sacramento rather than on the fortunes of a minor party. Camejo himself embraced that sensible logic in the campaign, when he said he would "not condemn those voters who feel forced to vote for a Democrat like Cruz Bustamante."

On presidential politics we disagree. We believe the number-one priority this November is to defeat George W. Bush. To that end, we have criticized Ralph Nader's decision to run. We have not, as Camejo charges, editorialized against the Greens' running a presidential slate, especially if the party is wise enough to choose a candidate and strategy that avoid tipping the race to Bush in battleground states. Judging from the delegate count as the Greens convene their national convention in Wisconsin, it seems that the bulk of Camejo's party may agree.

Do we think winner-take-all systems are the best choice? No, and over the years we have run

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EDITORIALS

Torture and Democracy

If there was ever any doubt, it is now clear that the torture at Abu Ghraib cannot be dismissed as the actions of a few bad actors. Two leaked memorandums, one to White House counsel Alberto Gonzales from the head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel and the other to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld from a Working Group on Detainee Interrogations in the Global War on Terrorism, make crystal clear that this Administration consciously sought out every loophole it could find to justify inflicting physical and psychological pain on captives for the purpose of obtaining intelligence. The memos are the "smoking guns" of the Abu Ghraib scandal. The fact that they were advanced by the two executive branch entities now in charge of the torture investigations makes clear that a special prosecutor is needed.

The memos reveal an Administration that took upon itself the power to define the law. In the considered views of these memos, the President of the United States is not bound by *any* law when he is acting as Commander in Chief. Indeed, the memos argue, it would be unconstitutional for Congress, or international law, to seek to constrain the President's prerogatives, even on a matter as universally prohibited and morally repugnant as torture.

The Office of Legal Counsel is often referred to as the "conscience" of the executive branch. But if this is the executive branch's conscience, we have grave problems. The office's August 2002 memo to Gonzales provides the framework for the Working Group report to Rumsfeld that followed in March 2003. Both memos read like a tax lawyer's advice on loopholes. The criminal ban on torture requires "specific intent," so if the interrogator knows that his actions will inflict severe harm, but he doesn't "specifically intend" them to do so, he's off the hook. Threats of death are permissible if they are not threats of "imminent death." Drugs designed to disrupt a suspect's personality may be administered if they do not "penetrate to the core of an individual's ability to perceive the world around him." Mental harm is fine if it's not "prolonged." Pain is acceptable if it's less than the pain that accompanies "serious physical injury, such as organ failure."

If an interrogator fails to follow this road map and commits what—even in the Bush Administration's eyes—is torture, the memos go on to offer a series of defenses. The interrogator can claim torture was a "necessity," that he was torturing "in self-defense" or that he was following "superior orders." All of this, of course, is directly contrary to established federal and international law, which holds that under no circumstances is torture "justified" or "excused." But even these loopholes aren't really necessary, because at bottom, the memos maintain, the President is simply not bound by law in interrogations connected to combating terrorism. Indeed, were Congress to try to regulate interrogation, it would "violate the Constitution's sole vesting of the Commander-in-Chief authority of the President."

At a June 10 news conference, George W. Bush said he instructed US troops to adhere to the law, and "that ought to comfort you." But he refused to say whether he understood that the law bans torture. And he says he "can't remember" whether he read the

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COMMENT

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memos that argue "the law" doesn't bind him as Commander in Chief. That's not the kind of memo you read and "can't remember." His Administration meanwhile has come up with yet another defense—blame it on the little guy; protect higher-ups. That one doesn't appear in the memos, as perhaps it goes without saying.

The significance of these memos goes far beyond torture, to the very core of our system of checks and balances. Kim Scheppele, a University of Pennsylvania law professor, argues that the Bush Administration has turned Abraham Lincoln on his head. In defending his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus during the Civil War, Lincoln asked, are "all the laws, but one, to go unexecuted, and the government itself go to pieces, lest that one be violated?" As Scheppele puts it, it seems the Administration's attitude is that all the Constitution's clauses but one—the Commander in Chief clause—are irrelevant. That view is perilously close to totalitarianism, and calls for more than a special prosecutor: Voters must remove those responsible for this assault on democracy.

COMMENT

Al Qaeda Disconnect

"The connection"—neoconservative shorthand for the purported link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda—is crumbling. Two days after Vice President Cheney asserted that Saddam "had long-established ties with Al Qaeda" and one day after George W. Bush echoed his second-in-command, the independent bipartisan 9/11 commission said that no such bond existed. In a staff statement the commission notes, "There have been reports that contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda...occurred after Bin Ladin had returned to Afghanistan [in 1996], but they do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship." According to the commission, bin Laden "explored possible cooperation with Iraq" in the early 1990s ("despite his opposition to Hussein's secular regime"), a senior Iraqi intelligence officer met bin Laden in 1994 and bin Laden asked Iraq for space where he could establish training camps and for assistance in obtaining weapons. But, the commission concludes, "Iraq apparently never responded." Regarding possible Iraqi involvement in the 9/11 plot, the commission states, "We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States."

With one paragraph, the commission decimates a primary rationale of Bush's war on Iraq. Before the invasion, Bush argued that Saddam was an immediate threat and war was necessary because (a) Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, and (b) Saddam was in cahoots with Al Qaeda and at any moment could slip bin Laden WMDs to use against the United States. As Bush proclaimed in November 2002, Saddam was "a threat because he is dealing with Al Qaeda." But he produced no proof then, and, according to the commission, he has none now.

There *were* contacts between Al Qaeda and Iraq, but it appears that a relationship never blossomed. The 9/11 report, however, does indicate that there were several nations essential to

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Al Qaeda's growth and development. Sudan supported it extensively in the early 1990s. Bin Laden's operatives obtained training in explosives, intelligence and security from Iran. Pakistan "facilitated" the "Taliban's ability to provide Bin Ladin a haven." The governments of Pakistan and Iran apparently permitted recruits to transit their nations to bin Laden's training camps (perhaps 20,000 jihadis overall flocked to these facilities). Saudi Arabia was "fertile fundraising ground" for Al Qaeda, which depended on informal money-transfer networks in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. In fact, it seems that Al Qaeda could not have thrived without official or unofficial assistance in many countries. But according to the commission, Iraq was not among them.

Before and after the Iraq invasion, Cheney and others tried to tie Saddam to the 9/11 attacks. Asked this past September if Saddam had anything to do with 9/11, Cheney again referred to the allegation that Mohamed Atta, lead 9/11 plotter, had met with a senior Iraqi intelligence officer in Prague five months before the strikes. Cheney was not reluctant about pushing this charge, although the CIA and FBI had already concluded that it was probably untrue. And in recent weeks neocon hawks like former CIA chief R. James Woolsey have continued to blow on the embers of the Atta-in-Prague story. But in another staff statement, the 9/11 commission declares, "Based on the evidence available—including investigation by Czech and U.S. authorities plus detainee reporting—we do not believe that such a meeting occurred."

But "the connection" persists—at least for Bush. The day before the 9/11 commission released these reports, a reporter asked Bush to provide "the best evidence" for claiming that Saddam was in league with Al Qaeda. "Zarqawi is the best evidence," Bush said. "Remember the e-mail exchange between Al Qaeda and he, himself, about how to disrupt the progress toward freedom" in Iraq? This reference was to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a terrorist operating in Iraq. Earlier this year, the Kurds intercepted a letter (not an e-mail) Zarqawi supposedly sent to Al Qaeda asking for help fomenting civil war in Iraq. According to US officials, Al Qaeda turned down the request. This exchange, if it indicates anything, is evidence of a division between the two terrorist camps. And Zarqawi has been linked in the past not to Saddam's regime but to Ansar al-Islam, a terrorist outfit that declared its opposition to Saddam.

If Zarqawi was the best evidence Bush could offer, he had a paltry case for going to war. Moreover, the 9/11 commission's findings show that Bush and the entire "connection" crowd were—and remain—disconnected from the known facts.

DAVID CORN

Divining the Court

Our best legal brains are still scratching their heads about the Supreme Court decision in the Pledge of Allegiance case (see Elisabeth Sifton, "The Battle Over the Pledge," April 5). Rather than deciding whether the words "one nation, under God" recited in public schools breached the wall between church and state, the Court ruled 8 to 0 that the plaintiff had no standing to sue for his daughter. So God wins on a technicality? Was the Court following the "iliction returns," in line with Mr. Dooley's adage, hedging against the defeat of a faith-based presidency in November? Or were the Justices making a stealth recusal because of the Court's daily invocation of the protection of the Deity—"God save the United States and this Honorable Court"? God only knows.

Two, Three, Many Iraqs

With the recent US setbacks and scandals in Iraq, you'd think the White House would abandon the President's aggressive, unilateralist military policy—the "Bush Doctrine"—and seek to avoid new confrontations abroad. But there are signs that the Administration is girding up for confrontations in three more places—Iran, North Korea and Taiwan/China.

The first of these countries to face a higher level of pressure will be Iran. In the mid-1990s Iran acquired advanced centrifuge systems from Pakistan that could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons and has since sought to mass-produce the devices at a number of secret facilities. Such activities violate the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Tehran signed in 1968. Under intense pressure from Britain, France and Germany, Iran agreed this past October to freeze all work at these facilities and to permit intrusive inspections by officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency. A new crisis erupted in February, however, when IAEA director general Mohamed ElBaradei revealed that Iran had omitted several nuclear facilities from its October declaration to the agency. Tehran responded by delaying the IAEA inspections. Then, it announced that it was starting work at yet another undeclared facility, a uranium enrichment plant at Isfahan. The Iranians insist that all of this is intended for peaceful purposes only and that they have no intention of manufacturing nuclear weapons. But officials in Washington are saying that evidence of a covert Iranian nuclear-arms program is mounting, prompting the need for more muscular action.

The next flashpoint is likely to come later this summer, when the IAEA will press for complete disclosure by Iran of all its uranium-enrichment activities and the permanent cessation of any project with weapons-making potential. The Bush Administration has indicated its willingness to give the IAEA a bit more time to compel Iranian compliance, but it has suggested that any further foot-dragging by Tehran could lead to a showdown with the United States. The White House has not given Iran a final deadline for full compliance with IAEA demands or indicated what action it would take if Tehran fails to halt all suspect activities. However, US officials have hinted that if Iran doesn't act soon, Washington will call on the UN Security Council to impose economic sanctions or other punitive measures. The Iranians could, of course, agree to US demands and thereby avert a major confrontation. If they resist, however, tensions are sure to mount. Although the White House is in no position to order an invasion of Iran, given the continuing disorder in Iraq, it could launch airstrikes against

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COMMENT

suspect nuclear facilities in Iran, thus allowing Bush to portray himself, again, as the unflinching defender of American security.

The next crisis in line for presidential attention concerns North Korea. The long-building North Korean crisis began in October 2002, when the United States revealed that Pyongyang had acquired centrifuge technology from Pakistan and had begun to enrich uranium for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The North Koreans admitted this and stated their intention to acquire an operational nuclear arsenal. Right-wing hawks in Washington called for military action to eliminate the North Korean nuclear capacity, but the While House has embraced a diplomatic approach intended to pressure Pyongyang into meeting US demands. The principal vehicle for this effort is the "six-power talks," with China, Japan, North and South Korea, Russia and the United States, that started in August 2003 in Beijing. The last round of six-party talks, in February, produced an agreement to convene "working groups" on assorted issues but no pledge from Pyongyang that it would eliminate its nuclear arsenal. The next round is set for June 23. In April during a meeting with Chinese officials, Vice President Cheney warned that the six-party talks must show "real results" soon or Washington would be forced to consider more forceful steps.

As in the case of Iran, the first step is likely to be a call on the UN Security Council to condemn North Korea and impose strict economic sanctions. This would almost certainly provoke a harsh response from Pyongyang, and US and South Korean forces would be put on high alert. The Pentagon has already begun moving additional forces into the region, including, most ominously, a squadron of nuclear-capable B-52 bombers.

The third impending crisis, involving China and Taiwan, has recently become more acute. In March, President Chen Shui-bian, who has vowed to move the island further along the road to independence from mainland China, was re-elected. Chen won a larger share of votes than he did in the previous election (when three candidates vied for the presidency), and popular support for independence is growing. Chinese leaders have recently issued fresh threats of military action, and while Beijing is thought to lack the capacity to invade and occupy Taiwan, it does possess hundreds of short-range ballistic missiles capable of striking the island. Officially, the United States is opposed to any unilateral move by Taipei to declare its independence. But the Bush Administration announced in April that it would sell Taiwan $1.78 billion worth of advanced radar equipment, effectively tying that country's defenses to America's burgeoning ballistic missile defense system. This action suggests Washington is prepared to supply the Taiwanese with the military gear to resist any Chinese attack, including an all-out missile barrage. This would mean that Taiwan eventually could declare independence without fear of Chinese retaliation—a situation that can only be read in Beijing and Taipei as an open invitation by Washington to move in this direction.

The United States and China have, of course, clashed over Taiwan on many occasions, but now the United States appears to be offering Taiwan a credible route to independence. This development would be viewed by Chinese leaders as a threat to their continued authority—and could provoke a desperate and extremely dangerous last-minute bid to resolve the crisis through military action. US leaders surely know this, so their decision to proceed with the BMD sale suggests they are willing to risk such a cataclysm.

While the Administration's intentions remain obscure, two points are worthy of concern. First, the Administration could heat up the international atmosphere before the election to reinforce the "don't change leaders in the middle of a crisis" argument. Second, even if it doesn't, we've been given a taste of what we can expect in a second Bush Administration. Either way, we see that the White House is not inhibited by the current turmoil in Iraq from moving into even more dangerous waters. MICHAEL T. KLARE

Michael T. Klare, Nation *defense correspondent, is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College. He is the author of* Blood and Oil, *forthcoming from Metropolitan.*

CALVIN TRILLIN

BUSH ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES ON NATIONAL SECRETS

When piqued at Ambassador Wilson
The Bushmen saw no reason why
They shouldn't just leak to all quarters
The name of a CIA spy.

And Chalabi, Man From Armani,
Got secrets from them, whereupon
He called an Iranian pal up
And saw to it they were passed on.

But one of our secrets is safe still,
And access is tightly controlled:
The names on that energy task force.
That secret will never be told.

Kerry & the Evangelicals

ELECTION MATTERS

We seem to have arrived at another of those bizarre and somewhat surreal moments when the media have "rediscovered" America's evangelicals. Everyone from Hollywood and the publishing industry to the *New York Times* and PBS is all atwitter about this finding, but the real question is whether or not John Kerry and the Democratic Party will also take notice and stop conceding the evangelical vote to the Republicans. The outcome of the election could very well hang in the balance.

The last time the media deigned to notice evangelicalism was during the televangelist scandals of the mid-1980s and, a decade before that, the announcement by a former governor of Georgia

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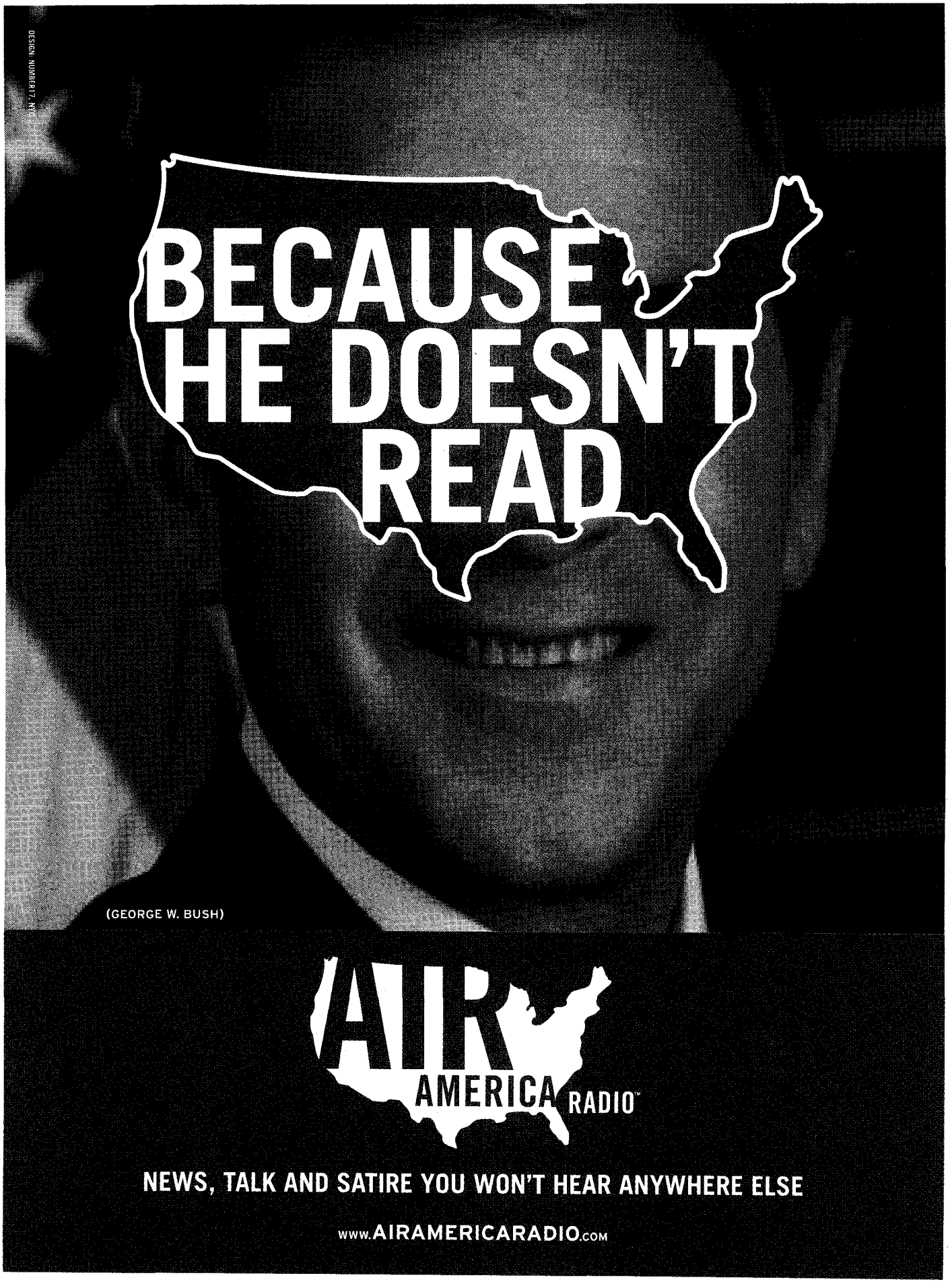

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COMMENT

and long-shot candidate for President that he was a "born-again Christian," a declaration that sent journalists scurrying for their Rolodexes. How a movement that, according to a 2002 Gallup poll, encompasses 46 percent of the population could have gone "missing" for so long is another question, but the catalyst for this latest discovery seems to be a confluence of factors: the unexpected popularity of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, which lured millions of evangelicals (who historically have been suspicious of both Hollywood and Roman Catholicism) to the theaters; the sales of the Left Behind series of novels (over 62 million and counting), which depict life on earth during the apocalypse predicted in the Book of Revelation; and the impending presidential election, in which evangelicals may once again play a crucial role, just as they did in 1980, 1984 and 2000.

The conventional wisdom is that evangelicals—whose ranks include fundamentalists, pentecostals, charismatics and holiness people—will turn out in large numbers for George W. Bush, whom many evangelicals regard as one of their own. That may well be the case, and it is true that evangelicals have emerged in recent years as the GOP's most reliable constituency, serving the same role that organized labor once played for the Democrats. Evangelicals provided 40 percent of Bush's vote in 2000. But evangelicalism is a diverse and variegated movement, one that includes many African-Americans and a growing number of Hispanics. The evangelical vote for Bush in November, therefore, is not an inevitability; it may have less to do with ideological affinities with the Republicans than with indifference on the part of the Democrats.

Evangelicalism includes many evangelicals who are concerned more about social justice than economic self-aggrandizement. They take seriously Jesus' words about "blessed are the peacemakers," and they are appalled by the atrocities in Iraq. A minority? Perhaps, but Kerry's election prospects may well hinge on his ability to pry some evangelical votes away from Bush, just as Bill Clinton did in 1992 and 1996. If Kerry and the Democrats want to make a play for the evangelical vote, I suggest the following:

First, attend an evangelical church from time to time, but follow the example of Clinton, not Howard Dean. The former governor of Vermont, you'll recall, clumsily declared that Job was his favorite New Testament book (Job is in the Hebrew Bible), and he raised his hands, pentecostal-style, during congregational singing in an evangelical church. Evangelicals can spot a phony at forty paces, so the best advice for Kerry, a Roman Catholic, is to be attentive and respectful without "going native." Yes, amid the Lewinsky scandal, many evangelicals came to regard Clinton as a phony, too, but fair-minded evangelicals also recognized a core of genuine piety. Despite his shortcomings, Clinton, having grown up in the Bible Belt, knew how to behave in church.

Second, affirm the First Amendment for what it is: the best friend religion in America has ever had. Religious life has flourished in this country precisely because the government has (for the most part, at least) stayed out of the religion business. Ever since George Gallup began asking the question during World War II, around 95 percent of Americans say they believe in God or a Supreme Being, a number almost double that of other Western nations. With its provision for disestablishment, the First Amendment set up a free market of religion, where religious entrepreneurs (to extend the metaphor) compete with one another for popular followings and, in so doing, insure a salubrious religious culture. Attempts to undermine the separation of church and state—with prayer in public schools, faith-based initiatives, school vouchers or posting the Decalogue in public places—ultimately undermine the vitality of religious life in America by making religious expression compulsory.

Third, reiterate your support for choice while acknowledging, at the same time (to the extent you believe it to be the case), that abortion itself is regrettable. Although this position sounds like heresy to many Democrats, the only two successful Democratic candidates for president since the *Roe* decision held similar views. In 1976 Jimmy Carter declared that although he was "personally opposed" to abortion, he did not want to make it illegal. Despite enormous pressure from the Catholic bishops toward the close of the campaign—sound familiar?—Carter held his ground. Clinton frequently said he wanted abortion to be "safe, legal and rare."

A statement like, "I have no interest in making abortion illegal; I want to make it unthinkable," captures the proper distinction between abortion as a legal issue and abortion as a moral issue. Regarding the former, the rights of individual privacy preclude a legal ban on abortion; besides, the state issues a legal certificate at birth, not at conception. Americans have to be reminded, however, that abortion is a choice with moral repercussions, albeit a choice to be made by the individual and her conscience, not by the state. As for making abortion "rare" or "unthinkable," a Kerry administration could do more to discourage abortion than the five Republican administrations since *Roe* by undertaking a campaign to encourage contraception and adoption, similar to campaigns directed against smoking or alcohol and spousal abuse. A pledge to do so would get the attention of evangelical voters. (It might also quiet the Catholic bishops somewhat, whose hypocrisy, in light of the pedophilia scandals, apparently knows no bounds.)

Finally, remind evangelicals of their heritage. Evangelicals in the nineteenth century set the political and social agenda for the nation. They were in the vanguard of abolitionism, the temperance movement (then considered a progressive cause), prison reform, education and women's rights. Almost invariably, they took up the cause of those on the margins of society. Sadly, the religious right, with its opposition to women's rights and civil rights and its support for tax cuts for the affluent, has defaulted on the noble legacy of nineteenth-century evangelical activism.

Will evangelicals flock to the Democratic Party in large numbers this fall? No, probably not. The cant of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and James Dobson (not to mention Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity) has been substantial and, to this point, unrefuted. It has taken a toll. Still, I'm willing to bet that there are plenty of evangelicals who, if presented with a thoughtful alternative to the red-meat rhetoric of the religious right, might be willing to consider an alternative. It's a wager that Kerry and the Democrats should make as well.

RANDALL BALMER

Randall Balmer, an expert witness in the Alabama Ten Commandments case, chairs the religion department at Barnard College. His books include Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey Into the Evangelical Subculture in America, *made into an award-winning PBS documentary.*

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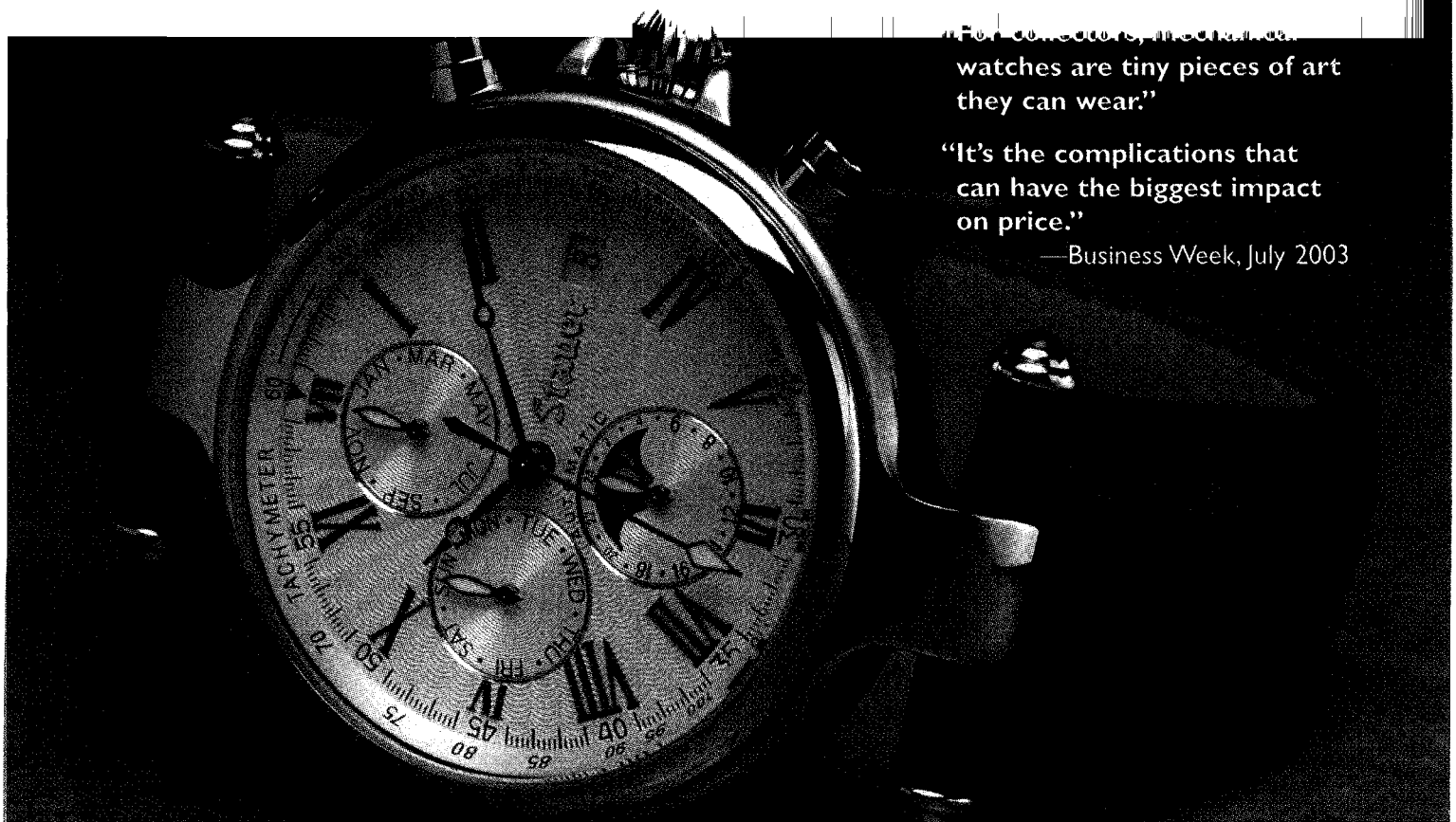

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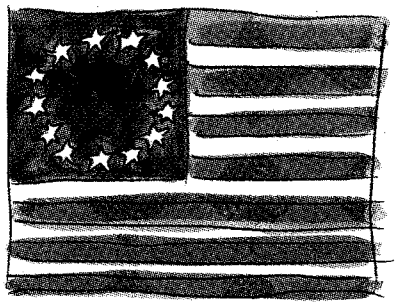
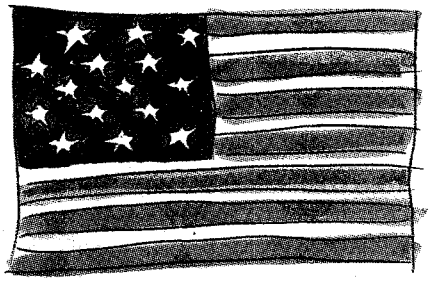
COMMENT

VENGEANCE IS MINE

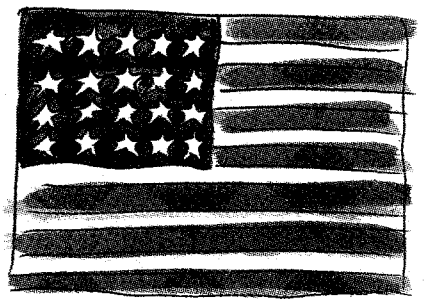
By Edward Sorel



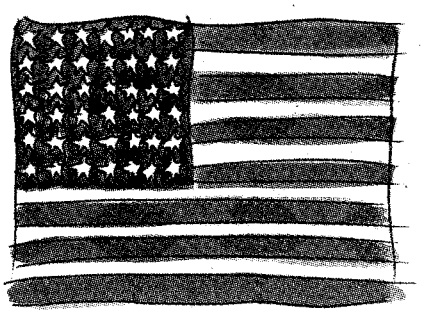
ONCE FREE OF ENGLAND'S OPPRESSIVE REGULATIONS, THE COLONISTS WASTED NO TIME IN BRINGING MORE AND MORE SLAVES INTO AMERICA.



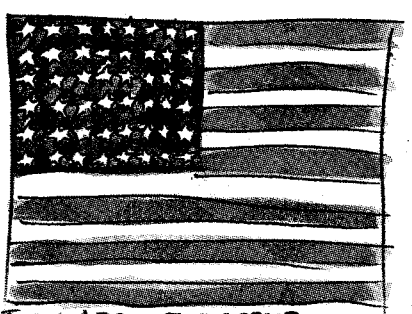
THEN WITH GOOD OLD AMERICAN "KNOW-HOW," THEY BROKE ALL TREATIES WITH THE INDIANS AND BEGAN PUSHING THEM FURTHER AND FURTHER WEST.



THE INDIANS THAT WEREN'T KILLED WERE THEN IMPRISONED ON RESERVATIONS, LEAVING THE ARMY FREE TO USE ITS GUNS ON MEXICANS, FILIPINOS AND NICARAGUANS.



RETURNING TO THE STATES, THE ARMY THEN CAME TO THE RESCUE OF HARD-WORKING INDUSTRIALISTS, WHO WERE BEING THREATENED BY MONEY-MAD STRIKERS.



THEN, AFTER THE DEFEAT OF GERMANY IN 1945, HIGH-RANKING NAZI SCIENTISTS WERE IMPORTED BY THE UNITED STATES TO WORK ON NEW DEATH MACHINES.

WELL, WHAT CAN YOU DO? EVERY SUPERPOWER DOES THINGS THEY DON'T BRAG ABOUT. I TRY TO BE AS UNDER-STANDING AS I CAN.

BUT WHEN THEY CHANGED THEIR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO INCLUDE THE LINE "ONE NATION UNDER GOD," I REALLY GOT MAD!!

BLAMING ME FOR THEIR ATROCITIES! THAT'S WHEN I BEGAN SENDING THEM GLOBAL WARMING, AND SHMUCK PRESIDENTS...

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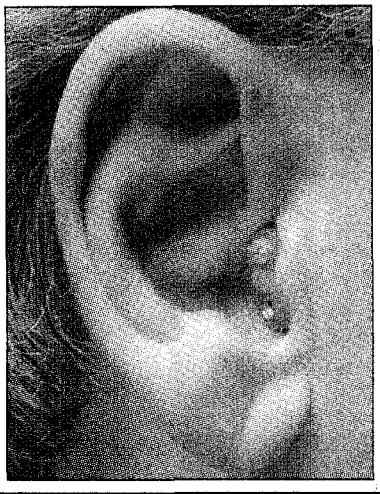

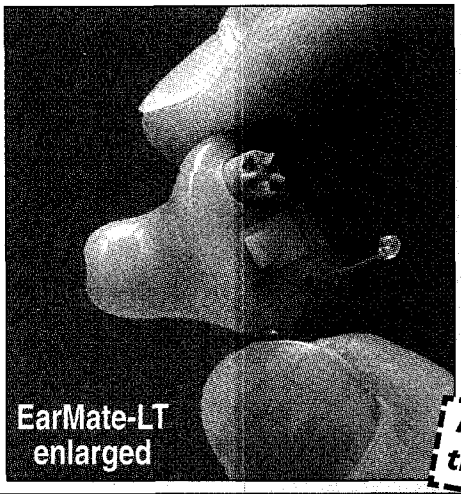

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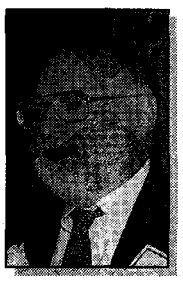

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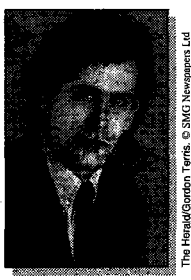

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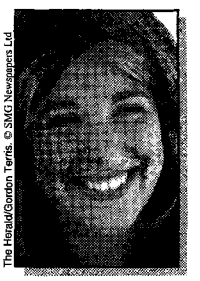

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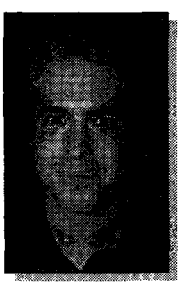

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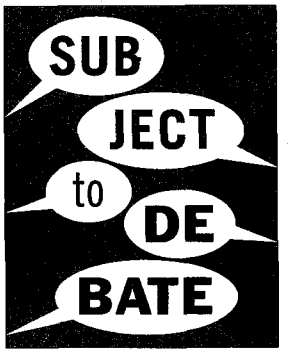
KATHA POLLITT

Sex and the Stepford Wife



As numerous reviewers of the overblown and over-remade remake of *The Stepford Wives* have pointed out, men do not really want to be married to robots. In particular, it is probably safe to say, they do not want to be married to robots who wear pastel flowered dresses and floppy garden-party hats and who wax ecstatic over cupcakes and Christmas crafts—even if they fetch drinks like Rover and don see-through lingerie for a lunchtime quickie. Indeed, in none of its versions—Ira Levin's slender novel, the 1975 scary movie or the new, comic rendition—does the plot of *The Stepford Wives* make a lot of sense. Why would men go to all the trouble of killing their uppity feminist wives and replacing them with pliant androids when they could just divorce them and marry 25-year-olds? Or hire a housekeeper and have girlfriends?

A lot of cultural change has gone over the dam since 1975. By today's standards the original heroine, Joanna Eberhart, a mildly spirited amateur photographer, would be a slacker. In the remake, Joanna (Nicole Kidman) is the brilliant, tightly wound head of a TV network who specializes in battle-of-the-sexes reality shows (*I Can Do Better*) in which the women always win. In the original, the men were cold and sinister; in the new version, they're nebbishes who need to be constantly drilled in masculine prerogatives by the head of the Men's Association (Christopher Walken). Time has changed Stepford, too, the Connecticut suburb to which Joanna's junior-executive husband (Matthew Broderick) whisks her away to save their marriage after a career crash gives her a nervous breakdown: The town has morphed from staid and comfortable to hard-right and rich. It's lost its one black family and gained a token pair of homosexuals.

It's all downhill after the setup. Paul Rudnick, who wrote the script, is a very funny man in the classic gay style—the movie has enough camp for all the Boy Scouts in America—but the story makes no sense. Basically, Rudnick wants to have his cupcakes and eat them too: Thus, men *are* sexist weaklings and housewives *are* servile bimbos and ambitious women *are* obnoxious but will either mellow through love or turn the tables on men because They Can Do Better—take your pick. The movie is such a confused satire of its original premises—this time, the ultimate villain is an ultratraditional *woman*—that the characters seem to utter all their lines as if they are speaking in scare quotes.

Commentators have bridled at the implication that men are hustling resistant women into suburban purdah: Today, women stay home because they want to. "Look at the fringe benefits," Stephanie Zacharek writes in *Salon*, "a giant, comfortable house in Connecticut, the freedom to watch your children grow up instead of rushing off to work every day, enough money to feed and clothe them well—sure doesn't look bad to me." (Children are barely more visible than blacks in Stepford, but let that pass.) Domestic goddesshood is definitely back, and, if only as a fantasy, a lot of women are buying it: It wasn't men who made Martha Stewart a multimillionaire. On the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where I live and where the standard feminine garb has for decades been strictly Hot Sicilian Widow, the display windows this season are full of frilly getups straight out of a Stepford shoppe (if you'd rather be a doll than an automaton, Mattel is bringing out a line of Barbie clothes for real-life women).

As a plot the story may be silly, but as a metaphor it's powerful. There's a reason "Stepford wife" has entered the American lexicon. It expresses, dramatically and succinctly, two compelling and in some ways competing explanations for women's subjection within marriage: Men insist on it, and women—other women—insist on it. In the 1970s, when feminism was new, both these truths were obvious. Now, they are obscure: Women have learned to describe everything they do, no matter how apparently conformist, submissive, self-destructive or humiliating, as a personal choice that cannot be criticized because personal choice is what feminism is all about. Women have become incredibly clever at explaining these choices in ways that barely mention social pressures or male desires. How many bright little essays have I read by young brides who insist that giving up their names is just the sensible, logical, mature, modern, *feminist* thing to do, the very proof of their marriage's egalitarianism? Probably they actually believe this. And yet, were it not for those social and masculine pressures, it is difficult to imagine that women would make some of the "personal" choices they now truculently defend.

After all, you have to wonder, as Catherine Orenstein did in a much-discussed *New York Times* op-ed, if women are free to be whatever they want, why are they still so obsessed with fitting narrow and rigid definitions of beauty? Feminism was supposed to send those to the trash can along with girdles and white gloves. Who would have thought in 1975 that thirty years later women would be tottering about in excruciating shoes—and having their little toes cut off to fit into them? Or injecting their faces with botulism toxin and undergoing plastic surgery at ever younger ages? Even teenagers are getting breast implants—11,326 girls 18 and under had them in 2003, nearly triple the previous year's figure. Just try, though, to find a female in a plastic surgeon's waiting room who'll admit that breast augmentation has anything to do with pleasing men. Oh no, that expensive and painful operation, with its attendant, well-publicized dangers, is all about curing a tragic disease (micromastia, *aka* small breasts), finding clothes that fit or boosting her self-esteem. But why does her self-esteem hinge on having big breasts in the first place? Forget self-esteem. What about self-respect? Why can't she feel good about herself by accomplishing something—climbing a mountain, painting a picture, reading a book? That's what real self-esteem comes from. In fact, according to several studies, women with breast implants are three times as likely to kill themselves as other women, even the flat-chested.

Of course, the critics are literally right: There is no town like Stepford, even in deepest Connecticut. But it still exists where it always did: in our heads. ■

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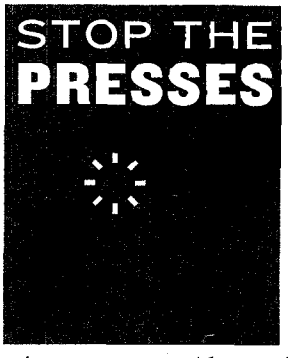
ERIC ALTERMAN

The Soros Slander Campaign Continues



We return this week to the conservative crusade to destroy the reputation of financier and philanthropist George Soros. The Hungarian-born billionaire has driven Republicans to distraction for two reasons. First, after decades of dedicating his fortune to fighting for democracy and civil society in his native Eastern Europe, he has turned his attention to the United States, where he is spending as much as $15 million to help various liberal groups improve their efforts to expose the malfeasance of the Bush Administration and defeat it in 2004. Second, in response to some surprise questioning at a meeting with Jewish leaders last year, Soros offered his opinion that Israeli foreign policy is in significant measure responsible for increasing anti-Semitism around the world.

The attacks have been ratcheted up in recent weeks because the Republicans see his prominent role in funding organizations like America Coming Together, MoveOn.org and the Center for American Progress (where I am a senior fellow) as a means to tar John Kerry as a dangerous radical by association. They'd also like to scare off others who might be considering such roles for themselves. The Republican National Committee has circulated a briefing paper on Capitol Hill in which Soros is referred to as "Lord of the Democrats" and the "Daddy Warbucks" of the drug legalization movement, and which highlights what it deems to be his controversial positions on abortion, gun control and the right to end one's own life. In Richard Mellon Scaife's *NewsMax* magazine, a writer named Richard Poe has extended the attack against the "somewhat loony" Soros, who, he says, "hates America" and is seeking to engineer a "coup" against George W. Bush. Poe has been invited out of the Scaife swamp to repeat this nonsense to millions of people via Bill O'Reilly's Fox program, in which the host has repeatedly denounced the alleged crimes of the man he calls "as far left as you can get and not move to Havana," "the most powerful Democrat in the country" and "the Godfather." Not much on nuance, O'Reilly describes Soros's position on immigration as follows: "Come on in, Al Qaeda. We'll get bin Laden a condo. If he doesn't have the money, we'll income-redistribute and get it to him." Mr. "No Spin" alleges that the mainstream media present Soros as if he were "Little Bo Peep" in order to protect the Democrats "because most Americans don't buy into his agenda."

O'Reilly also heaps scorn on Soros for being a "committed atheist," characterizing him as "definitely anti-Israel in the sense that he believes...that the Palestinians are the aggrieved and the oppressors are the Israeli government." But even he does not go as far as Tony Blankley, editor of the editorial page of Sun Myung Moon's *Washington Times*, former spokesperson for Newt Gingrich and a frequent guest panelist on cable and network chat shows. Using unmistakably anti-Semitic tropes and metaphors, Blankley appeared on Fox's *Hannity & Colmes* to call Soros a "robber baron" and "pirate capitalist." "This is a man who blamed the Jews for anti-Semitism," he continued. "This is a man who, when he was plundering the world's currencies, in England in '92, he caused the Southeast Asian financial crisis in '97. He said that he has no moral responsibility for the consequences of his financial actions.... He is a self-admitted atheist; he was a Jew who figured out a way to survive the Holocaust." As blogger Josh Marshall pointed out, "You have to hand it to [Blankley], pasting together a rant which manages to weave together accusations of anti-Semitism and most of the key anti-Semitic slurs and motifs." Moreover, Blankley implies that Soros should somehow be blamed for surviving the Holocaust.

Along with others, I called attention to this incredible outburst on my website, Altercation (www.altercation.msnbc.com), and a reader contacted Blankley about it. Blankley responded with an e-mail that was then passed on to me with no promise of off-the-record protection. The pundit made his meaning plain: "Soros and his family converted from their Jewish faith and survived the Holocaust (there was speculation that they may have collaborated with the Nazi's [*sic*])." When I both called and e-mailed Blankley to ask him to defend this slander, he did not deny he sent the e-mail, nor did he specifically address its contents, though he expressed "regret" that his statement on *Hannity & Colmes* was "both incomplete and pregnant with a malicious implication I did not intend." He claimed that, having read an assertion on the Internet that Soros collaborated with the Nazis, he "started down that path and thought better of it in mid-sentence" in his appearance on Fox. What's unclear is why he continued to circulate this outrageous tale—as he did in the e-mail he sent to my Altercation correspondent—long after he had time to rethink the comments he made for which he now expresses regret. It is hard to imagine a more immoral strategy to use against a Jewish opponent than to insinuate that his family were Nazi collaborators (not that a teenage George Soros would have had much say in the matter at the time).

All of the above bespeaks the desperation that Republicans and their punditocracy shock troops apparently feel at the prospect of being challenged by someone with the resources to make a difference in an election in which polls show that a majority of voters disapprove of George Bush and that a plurality plan to vote for his opponent. And while they cannot be held responsible for the poisonous rhetoric of Blankley and others, mainstream Jewish organizations like Abe Foxman's ADL have sought to stigmatize Soros because they cannot countenance the view—openly stated by Jewish leaders in Europe—that Israel's harsh treatment of the Palestinians under Ariel Sharon contributes to worldwide hatred of, and violence against, diaspora Jews.

Soros tells me that none of these ugly slanders of his good name will in any way deter him from his task of helping to save the nation and the world from the Bush Administration. "The more I am attacked, the more I am ready to stand up for what I believe in. But I am frustrated by the reach and influence of the RNC propaganda machine. They are presenting a totally distorted picture of who I am and what I stand for." ■

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ARTICLES

State of the Union:

The Marriage Issue

For better or worse, there isn't always magic in marriage, but it does involve a certain alchemy. Love, sex, romance, friendship, children, family, property, money, health, death, taxes, work, religion: Some or all of these constituent parts are bundled into a single package, which then, rather impressively, holds everything together—until it breaks apart. As a result, marriage is a battleground for a whole roiling mass of distinct yet interconnected issues. This is especially clear in the national debate over same-sex marriage, which is not just about evolving "family values" but, as the Rev. Howard Moody argues here, the way church and state vie for authority over our intimate lives.

Whether because of its potency as a symbol or simply its centrality in social life, one thing can be said about marriage: It is a subject on which everyone has an opinion. So it seemed a perfect subject for a special issue, and this June—season of weddings, gay and otherwise—a ripe moment for it. No sooner were a few tentative feelers put out soliciting replies to our query, "Can Marriage Be Saved?" than the contributions to the forum began pouring in—by turns angry, measured, ecstatic and amused, but all inspired by a thirst for frank discussion of marriage, both as it is structured and mythologized and as it is lived.

Such a range of perspectives is urgently needed in the gay-marriage debate, which is typically conducted in pro/con format. The "pro" picture often leaves the impression that gays and lesbians just want a place at the altar—neither mining the once-robust queer and feminist critique of marriage nor probing the fractious state of the marital union. "Ironically," notes Judith Stacey, "feminists and gay liberationists find ourselves defending gay marriage against the conservative backlash." Though Donna Minkowitz writes here of her desire to marry, and Catharine Stimpson recounts the reasons she'd prefer to abstain, their essays share a wariness about what gays and lesbians may be marrying into—"a moralistic and ridiculously unitary vision of the way people ought to live," as Minkowitz puts it.

Exactly such a vision is now supported by public policy, as Sharon Lerner reveals in her analysis of the Bush Administration's vaunted marriage-promotion initiative aimed at low-income populations. Absent coercive federal policy, young, white, professional women are pressured to get hitched on a "timetable" by marriage rules repeated ad nauseum in popular culture and self-help books, as Hillary Frey reports. Marriage promotion of another sort occurs nightly on reality TV shows like *The Bachelor* and *Average Joe*, where, Judith Halberstam writes, marriage has "become a game show," and a telegenic spouse just one more prize. "Heterosexuality never looked so fragile," she concludes. By contrast, gay protest weddings in New Paltz, San Francisco and dozens of other municipalities, described here by Alisa Solomon, follow the "enduring, endearing narrative" of two lovers overcoming obstacles to wed. Like the larger debate over gay marriage, these ceremonies hold "both radical and depoliticizing potential." Here's hoping the former prevails.

—Richard Kim and Betsy Reed, Editors

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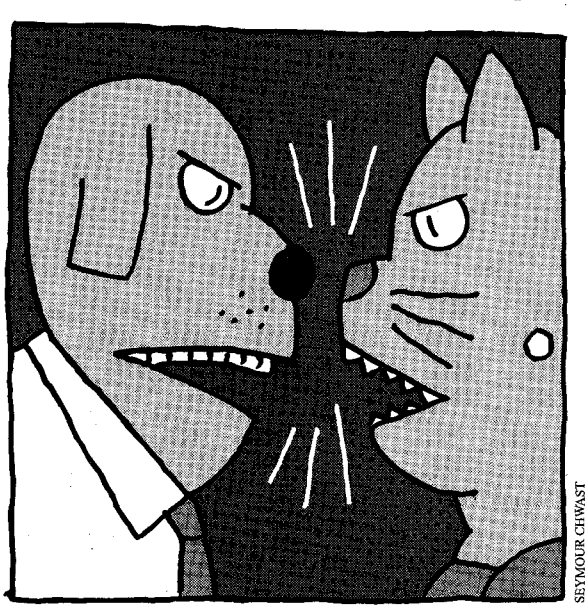
Can Marriage Be Saved?
A Forum

If you believe social conservatives, marriage in America has been under dire assault for more than a century—from adultery, divorce, feminism, birth control and now, apparently, gays and lesbians, who on May 17, the day Massachusetts began recognizing same-sex marriages, joined this at once venerable and fraught institution. Conservatives have a point; the percentage of married Americans has been in steady decline for decades. And yet, as the annual June hordes at the altar and the dramatic struggle for gay marriage attest, marriage continues to occupy a dominant position in American society. How does one make sense of this confusing marital landscape? We asked a range of writers and scholars to offer their thoughts. Should marriage be abolished? Reformed? How is it that marriage—despite its routine and oft-documented failures—persists as the focus of both our personal aspirations and political struggles? Their responses follow. —*The Editors*

Ellen Willis

SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM, appearing on *The Charlie Rose Show*, denounced civil unions as a "separate but unequal" solution to the gay-marriage issue. He argued that marriage was about more than just legal rights, and if civil unions were proposed as a substitute for marriage for everyone, heterosexual "married people would be up in arms."

Au contraire, for some of us at least. My husband and I got married, after living together for many years, to secure various rights and benefits for ourselves and our daughter. We had no desire to have the state recognize our personal relationship, let alone "sanctify" it, but that was a compulsory part of the package. I believe in the separation of sex and state. I also believe that social benefits like health insurance should not be privileges bestowed by marital status but should be available to all as individuals. Marriage, in the sense of a ceremonial commitment of people to merge their lives, is properly a social ritual reflecting religious or personal conviction, and should not have legal status. "Sanctity" is a religious category that is, or ought to be, irrelevant to secular law. The purpose of civil unions should be to establish parental rights and responsibilities, grant next-of-kin status for such purposes as medical decisions and insure equity in matters of property distribution and taxes. Such unions should be available to any two—or more—adults, regardless of gender.



SEYMOUR CHWAST

While same-sex marriage redresses an inequality between gays and straights, it reinforces inequality between married and unmarried people. It will force homosexuals, as it now forces heterosexuals, to sign on to a particular state-sponsored, religion-based definition of their relationship if they want full rights as parents and members of households. The desire for recognition and "normality" that motivates many of its proponents inescapably implies that the relationships of the unmarried and those that do not conform to conventional "family values" are less worthy of respect.

Yet despite its essential conservatism, gay marriage does have a subversive aspect. However much gay assimilationists may simply want to redefine family values to include them, heterosexuality is not merely incidental to the institution of marriage. Historically, a central function of marriage has been to enforce a repressive religious morality that enshrines heterosexual intercourse as the only licit sexual act, signifying the subordination of sexual pleasure to procreation. A one-man, one-woman definition of marriage is integral to the patriarchal conception of the family as a hierarchy with father ruling over dependent wife and children.

Homosexuality, by its very nature, challenges the primacy of procreation over sexual pleasure; when gay people have children, whether through birth or adoption, they only emphasize that sex, reproduction and childrearing have increasingly become separate activities. Similarly, homosexual coupling, however conventional, is inherently an offense to the traditional familial gender hierarchy. Feminism and gay liberation have already seriously weakened marriage as a transmission belt of patriarchal, religious values; conferring the legitimacy of marriage on homosexual relations will introduce an implicit revolt against the institution into its very heart, further promoting the democratization and secularization of personal and sexual life. (For starters, if homosexual marriage is OK, why not group marriage—which after all makes a lot of sense at a time when the economic and social fragility of family life is causing major problems?) This prospect is what exercises the cultural right. I believe it is also what troubles those legions of ambivalent Americans who support gay civil rights yet feel emotionally attached to heterosexual marriage as one of the last remaining bastions of traditional familial norms, which are fast slipping away.

But the left, for the most part, is in blinky-eyed denial, which is consis-

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tent with its general attitude toward familial politics. Since the Reagan era most mainstream leftists, feminists and gay rights advocates have been terrified of criticizing marriage or the family lest they offend social conservatives. Instead of acknowledging that feminism and gay liberation pose a challenge to the family as we've known it, they insist the only issue is recognizing "different kinds of families," all equally wonderful. The now-ubiquitous tic of advancing all progressive proposals in the name of "working families" (translation: "Don't worry, you can support economic populism and still be normal") has reinforced this evasion, which neither fools the opposition nor speaks to the ambivalent middle.

Legalizing same-sex marriage would be an improvement over the status quo. But let's see it for what it is—a step toward the more radical solution of civil unions, not vice versa.

Ellen Willis, who directs the cultural reporting and criticism program in the department of journalism at New York University, writes regularly on issues of cultural politics.

Randall Kennedy

STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE on behalf of racial minorities have often generated benefits that have enhanced the quality of life for society as a whole. Federal judicial monitoring of police practices arose from efforts to deter racist cops from beating confessions out of black suspects. The legal standards that provide substantial breathing room to publications that make mistakes in criticizing public figures emerged from efforts to safeguard newspapers against crippling libel actions brought by angry segregationists. Many of the key legal rules that protect demonstrators against arbitrary or discriminatory suppression were established by efforts to shield and encourage the black liberation movements of the 1960s. Some of the most impressive feminists and champions of gay liberation found their voices initially in campaigns for African-Americans and other oppressed peoples of color.

This pattern has continued with struggles to free marriage from invidious discriminations actuated by irrational or malevolent prejudices. In 1967 the Supreme Court belatedly invalidated state laws that prohibited people of different races from marrying one another. The Court announced its ruling in the most aptly titled decision in all of American law: *Loving v. Virginia*. On November 18, 2003, in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts made history by becoming the first American court to prohibit state officials from withholding marriage licenses from same-sex couples. In the course of its ruling, the Massachusetts Court referred repeatedly to *Loving* in an obvious attempt to tap into its popularity and legitimacy. Nowadays, after all, no national politician would dare support the laws that, for three centuries, prohibited interracial marriage.

The jurist who wrote *Goodridge*—a person who should be honored as the judge of the year—Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, is a South African–born white woman whose social consciousness was formed in the crucible of opposition to the apartheid regime and, later, through exertions on behalf of racial desegregation in the United States. Her court's landmark ruling took effect on May 17, which happened to be the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Symbolically and substantively, then, there are numerous threads that link campaigns against racism and homophobia at the marriage altar.

Unfortunately, there are some progressive African-American activists who oppose analogizing racial discriminations and sexual-orientation discriminations. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, for example, objects to the analogy, asserting that "some slave masters were gay," that "gays were never called three-fifths human in the Constitution" and that "they did not require the Voting Rights Act to have the right to vote." These objections should be swept aside. Yes, some slave masters were gay. But some were also black. And more to the point, some slaves were gay, as are a substantial number of black people who are descendants of slaves—a fact that Reverend Jackson seems keen to ignore. As for comparisons of legal standing, blacks and other racial minorities currently occupy a higher legal status than do gays and lesbians. In many locales, gays and lesbians are subject to open, unembarrassed and legally validated discriminations in terms of marriage, adoption, employment, housing, public accommodations and military service. Today, governments in America prevent no one from marrying on account of racial difference. But in forty-nine of the fifty states, gays and lesbians are wrongly prohibited from marrying on account of gender sameness. This is an injustice in which all Americans have a stake and against which all Americans should rally.

Randall Kennedy, a professor at Harvard Law School, is the author of Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity and Adoption *(Vintage).*

Edmund White

MARRIAGE HAS ALWAYS APPEALED to my heart (and even, oddly enough, to my crotch) and offended my head. For years, throughout my 20s, I longed to get married to a man, and the idea so excited me that I had to learn not to propose: I realized it was too much of a turn-on for me to trust it. The rhetoric of eternal love and marital fidelity thrilled me, though I was never faithful to anyone longer than a month. At the same time I knew that real marriage—the kind that actually existed between men and women and not in my same-sex fantasies—was primarily a legal and economic institution, a bride exchanged for cowrie shells or cows. Having seen my parents live through a difficult divorce, I knew perfectly well that when love evaporated what was left was rancor, a hit squad of lawyers and drained family coffers.

Nevertheless, from a practical political point of view I'm not sure that the breakdown of marriage has been of any advantage to women and children. On the contrary, the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the feminist revolution of the 1970s have had the totally unexpected and unintended result of depriving women of husbands' support and pushing women into the labor market, where they earn about 76 percent of what men earn for the same work. Social changes have also left single mothers high and dry without alimony or shared parental responsibilities. Men have gained and women have lost; as Barbara Ehrenreich has argued, the end of marriage has been a practical disaster for women. Perhaps these inequalities will be righted when the feminist revolution is more thoroughly assimilated.

And what about gay marriage? At first my rational side could

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see no advantages to it. I belong to the 1970s generation of gay liberationists who thought that gays might provide straights with a new, superior model of association, long chromosomes of lovers, partners, serial husbands and fuck buddies that would answer the real complexity of human needs. We were all certain that the ideal of companionate marriage invented in the nineteenth century represented an unrealizable goal, especially when the claims of hedonism and self-realization that cropped up in the second half of the twentieth century weakened the ethic of self-sacrifice. Companionate marriage—in which just one other person was supposed to be helpmate, sexual partner, best friend, domestic manager and soul-sister for life—obviously was not something that came naturally to the vagrant human spirit. Only strong religious convictions and an inflexible self-discipline could make it work, as well as a sense that one was living not for pleasure but out of duty to the next generation. Once that model of marriage started to collapse, gays proposed their own molecular models of multiple partners. To be sure, our model emerged in the late 1970s because that was an era in which antibiotics had stilled our fears of venereal disease and AIDS had not yet appeared with a new fatal consequence to promiscuity.

We thought that gays might provide straights with a new, superior model of association.

AIDS in the 1980s killed off many of the gay men who'd been adventurous about their personal lives—guys who slept around, took it up the ass, tried out new positions, played versatile roles, experimented with drugs. It preserved those men who were too drunk or too fearful or too puritanical or too homely or too traditional or too stiffly macho to try out any of those fun new gadgets or practices. Whereas the only visible gay leaders in the 1970s had been the leftist liberationist crowd, AIDS in the 1980s flushed out of the woodwork conservative, middle-class men, the ones who'd had no stake in coming out previously but who now were forced by disease out of the closet. Once out, these middle-class men seized power and knew how to wield it. They brought to the gay movement their own conservative values—including a respect for the family and for marriage.

Until a year ago I would have sniffed at the gay pro-marriage movement as just one more effort on the part of gay neocons to assimilate with their white, middle-class, straight friends and relatives. But the uproar of the Christian right against gay marriage has won me over to the cause. Anything that Republicans and Christians hate so much can't be all bad. The question for me is no longer one of lifestyle but rather of civil rights. Lesbians and gays should have all the same rights as straights. Some of the rights we gained earlier were peripheral (and often reversible), whereas marriage goes right to the heart of national concepts of community and the future. Civil unions are not as good as marriages precisely because they lack the quasi-mystical symbolism (and many of the rights of inheritance and adoption).

Curiously, perhaps the ardor and zeal that gays are bringing to marriage may renew the prestige of the institution even in the eyes of straights. And maybe gay male couples—who aren't subjected to the compassionate, civilizing influence of women—need marriage to soften them, bring a note of humanity and kindness into their relationships.

Edmund White, who teaches writing at Princeton, has written seventeen books.

Martha Fineman

WHEN SPEAKING OF THE FUTURE of the American family, politicians of various stripes often resort to the language of "personal responsibility" to make the point that individuals should take care of themselves and their families in this society. This way of speaking applies to issues ranging from same-sex marriage to childcare and other forms of dependency, as well as to poverty and education in general. Though marriage is thought of as a private contract between individuals (spouses), it is public state law that anchors and frames this relationship. Further, in today's conservative rhetoric, marriage becomes much more than a legal category. Publicly and symbolically, it is reconfigured into the mantle of morality, from both a societal and an individual standpoint. Marriage is presented as the path to personal and familial (and therefore, societal) salvation. Individual responsibility thus masks a broader effort to privatize dependency—which extends to the broader organization of American society, politics and economics.

But individual responsibility is an impoverished and dangerous vision of family policy. This way of organizing the world leaves us with a social and political system in which concern for children and other dependents is expressed only as concern for our own children and members of our own family. Individual responsibility is misleadingly simplistic and inaccurately reflects the reality of our lives as members of society interacting with various institutions beyond the family. On a political and symbolic level, the concept fails to represent our society's collective dimensions; one in which we have values that reach beyond the merely individual to demands that we pay attention to our general well-being. Individual responsibility will never be sufficient to fulfill the obligations we owe as members of society.

We have lost the sense that there should be some notion of collective responsibility to all children (and all families) that is not discharged merely because we take care of our own. No one would dispute that responsibility accompanies parenthood. But should the state leave the family exclusively responsible for children and other family members in need of assistance and care? Children are the future—they are a collective good—of benefit to the society at large as the citizens, workers and consumers of the future. Taking care of those who are disabled or fall ill or become dependent in their elderly years is equally a collective good. No society should neglect its ill, disabled and frail elderly, or ignore families overwhelmed by the demands of care.

Intergenerational responsibility more accurately reflects our distinctive and historic commitment to the goals of equality and

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justice for all. It would demand that the government subsidize the families that produce its future citizens in the same way that it subsidizes (through tax policy, developmental assistance and economic incentives) the market institutions that produce its goods and services. Public institutions, such as schools, must be adequately and equally funded and maintained. Families with ill or disabled members should receive support in their efforts. A government that shirks its intergenerational responsibility is a failure.

We should assess our policies according to their intergenerational implications. Politicians should be required to tell us how their proposals or positions on such things as social welfare policy, education, the environment and so on will affect future generations. We are not interested in platitudes about grandchildren and fictionalized scenarios but in concrete policy discussions that appeal to our intelligence rather than play on our emotions and presumed biases. We should foster only a politics that recognizes our collective intergenerational aspirations and needs, as well as our individual problems and perspectives.

Martha Fineman is the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Law at Emory. Her most recent book, The Autonomy Myth: A Theory of Dependency, *was published this spring by the New Press.*

Laura Kipnis

WE LIVE IN ANXIOUS TIMES, conjugally speaking. Given recent census data, the condition of marriage has been declared a civic emergency, since as goes marriage, so goes the future of civilization—or thus conservatives fear. But what of all those thankless marrieds doing their best to uphold this flailing institution, especially those for whom the term "happily married" does not entirely apply? A 2003 Rutgers University study reported that 40 percent of married Americans do not describe themselves as very happy in this state. This is rather shocking: such a large percentage of the population pledged to lives of discontent and emotional stagnation, because that's what's expected, or "for the sake of the children," or various other rationales. Contemplate the everyday living conditions that follow such trade-offs: households submersed in low-level misery and soul-deadening tedium; the reek of unsatisfied desires and unmet needs; a populace downing anti-depressants like M&Ms, or other forms of creative self-medication from double martinis to serial adultery.

Though what if luring a populace into conditions of emotional stagnation and deadened desire were actually functional for society? Consider the norms of modern marriage. Take monogamy, its fundamental organizing premise. The presumption here is that desire can and will persist throughout a lifetime of coupled togetherness, but what if it doesn't? Apparently you just give up sex: Desire may wane, but those vows must remain intact. (Though let's not forget what a lot of investment opportunities sagging marital desire provides—Viagra, couples porn, the therapy industry—dead marriages are actually rather good for the economy.)

Consider next the panoply of regulations and interdictions that underscores domestic coupledom—rules about everything from how you load the dishwasher, to what you can't say at dinner parties, to how you drive. What is it about marriage that turns nice-enough people into small-time dictators, whose favorite marital recreational activity is mate behavior modification? What is it about modern coupledom that makes criticizing another person's habits and foibles a synonym for intimacy? (Or is it something about the conditions of modern life itself: Does domesticity become a venue for control issues because most of us have so little of it elsewhere in our lives?)

Then there's that American relationship mantra: "Good marriages take work." How exactly did the rhetoric of the factory become the default language of coupledom? Is there really anyone for whom this is an attractive proposition, who after spending all day at a job, wants to come home and work some more? (If ours is a society that promotes more work to an already overworked population as the solution to marital discontent, who really benefits from an ethos of overwork? Typically not those performing the labor.)

If modern marriage has transpired into a social institution devoted to maximizing obedience and the work ethic while minimizing freedom and mobility, to renouncing excess desires (and whatever quantities of imagination and independence they come partnered with) in exchange for love and companionship, clearly there are social advantages here: The psychology of marital stasis is remarkably convergent with that of a cowed work force and a docile electorate. Who needs a policeman on every corner with such emotional conditions in effect?

Given that "wanting more freedom" is the contemporary euphemism for leaving such marriages, the ascendancy of gay marriage as a political demand has a depressing side to it. Resource distribution issues aside (which could be the case, were this the political fight being fought instead), the mainstreaming of homosexuality aside (with the kissing up to mainstream values it necessarily entails), of all possible social claims to advance, why this one now? If "wanting more freedom" were treated as a serious political question rather than a euphemism, no doubt different social claims would be forefronted. (Working less instead of more?) And should such claims be advanced, what other social contracts and vows might be up for re-examination, what other unrewarding social institutions would have to start watching their step?

Laura Kipnis is the author of Against Love: A Polemic *(Pantheon).*

Nora Ephron

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT DRIVE ME NUTS is that people always say that one in two American marriages ends in divorce. This isn't exactly true. What is true is that every year there are twice as many marriages as divorces, but this doesn't mean that one in two marriages ends in divorce. (Unfortunately I can't really explain why this is so, any more than I can explain short selling, but trust me.)

I have a whole collection of statistics of this sort, statistics that persist in spite of the fact that they're untrue. One of them is that one in eight Americans will have worked for McDonald's. Another, which was stated categorically the other day on NBC, is that one in three New York men is gay. Another one, and I'm sorry to say this in the pages of *The Nation*, is the number of people who are killed by landmines (one every twenty-two

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minutes), and I don't even want to get into incest, which for a while was alleged by some feminists to have happened to one in two women.

The statistic about marriage persists, of course, because although it isn't true, it feels true. There's a huge amount of divorce. Divorce is the news about marriage, and has been for the past fifty years. Divorce is the news about the culture, too, even though we tend to think that things like television and the Internet are the news about the culture. Divorce is probably going to turn out to be the reason for everything. And unlike television and the Internet, which may or may not be "good things," divorce is bad. It's bad for women and it's bad for children. Show me an assassin or a serial killer whose parents weren't divorced and I will show you an anomaly.

On the other hand, I have been divorced twice, and thank God.

Happy marriages aren't all alike, but most happy marriages aren't particularly interesting. But divorce is. Love is bland; the end of love is riveting. Love is serious; the end of love is farce. Love is mysterious and elusive; the end of love is specific to a fault. And when love ends, in the hands of lawyers, you can often see things about marriage that sometimes make me wonder whether half of American marriages (whether headed for divorce or not) aren't, for the most part, performances.

My friend Merrill Markoe once wrote that one of the most compelling reasons to hope that gay marriage becomes legal is that gays may end up doing for marriage what they do for run-down neighborhoods: restore it to its original splendor. No question that the photos of gay couples getting married these days are far more moving than those perfectly posed pictures of men and women in the Sunday Styles section. Gay couples are usually celebrating love that has lasted, which is, of course, the hard part about marriage. It will be a long time before there are half as many gay divorces as there are gay marriages, but long before that happens, there will be a statistic about it that won't exactly be true.

Nora Ephron, a writer and director, is currently working on the movie Bewitched.

Patricia Hill Collins

IT'S HARD TO REGULATE AFFAIRS of the heart. That's one reason segregation remains so deeply entrenched within American society. If people fail to come into contact with one another as equals across differences of class, race, ethnicity, gender, immigrant status, sexual orientation and religion, they are unlikely to grant one another full humanity. You can't love someone you have no opportunity to meet.

Love is one thing—marriage is an entirely different story. Most people are pressured to get married, and one fundamental rule governs this process—marry someone of the same race and different gender. In the US context, where race and class are so tightly bundled together, obeying the "same race" rule typically upholds existing social class arrangements. Because wealth and poverty are passed down through families, policing marriage keeps families racially homogeneous, virtually insuring that affluent white Americans will retain family assets and that black Americans disproportionately experience intergenerational economic disadvantage. Because the "different gender" rule installs heterosexuality as the preferred form of sexual expression, in a context that denies gay marriage, getting married becomes a mechanism for upholding gender norms of masculinity and femininity and for certifying heterosexuality.

The "same race, different gender" rule thus serves as one critical site for reproducing inequality. Segregate people into boxes of ghettos, barrios, closets, private households and prisons, rank the boxes as being fundamentally separate and unequal, and keep the entire system intact by scaring people to stay inside their boxes. Mystify these arrangements with ideologies of race, class, gender and sexuality. Encourage individuals to grant humanity only to those in their own segregated boxes. Reward them for dehumanizing, objectifying and, upon occasion, demonizing everyone else. Punish them for breaking the rules.

So how should we think about marriage and its rules? Some argue that breaking the rules is inherently transgressive, that refusing to marry or defying the "same race, different gender" code is the path to social transformation. Yet individual choice, no matter how heartfelt, can never get at the deeply entrenched structural nature of American social inequality. Interracial marriage has hardly made a dent in intergenerational black poverty. Others see saving marriage as critical. Choosing to commit to another human being through marriage can buffer us from the alienation of rampant individualism. Yet the rules that govern marriage limit our success in finding committed love. For now, marriage rules, until we decide to change it.

Patricia Hill Collins, a professor of sociology at the University of Cincinnati, is the author of Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism *(Routledge).*

Judith Butler

ARE YOU FOR OR AGAINST GAY MARRIAGE? Once one agrees to answer the question, one is already trapped. By answering, one loses the chance to ask, why has this become the question? When polled, I reject the proposed constitutional amendment restricting marriage to a man and a woman, and support legislation establishing marriage as an institution open to any two (or possibly more) people, regardless of gender. But if I enter this debate as if it were the priority for our times, I ratify that priority and fall into amnesia about what the alliances of the lesbian and gay movement used to be, and stifle the hope that its alliances and priorities still might broaden and change. For me, the more pressing question is: What would the priorities of a radical movement for sexual minorities be right now if gay marriage were not monopolizing the forefront of the political agenda?

The first issue that comes to mind is violence against queer youth and transgendered people. The contemporary legacies of Matthew Shepard, Gwen Araujo and Brandon Teena should remind us that lesbian and gay, genderqueer and trans people remain targets of violence not only on streets and bars but at the workplace and inside families. Gay marriage is not the same as alternative kinship, and it's only through extended kinship and broader community alliances that antiviolence efforts stand a chance of success. Marriage is but one way of addressing the

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problems of kinship: how to organize human relations that attend to basic needs and enduring forms of dependency like illness, shelter, childrearing and aging. It does not address our community responsibilities toward those who live, love, suffer, thrive and die outside the conjugal frame. What are the ties of kinship among those who defy gender norms, evoke public anxiety and often suffer loss of employment, loss of parental status, undergo physical injury and, sometimes, lose their lives? Rather than privatize those relations of care, why not extend our conception of kinship and community to establish ongoing support for vulnerable populations: genderqueer and trans people, youth and the aging?

Gay marriage became a national priority only after the AIDS crisis, despite its persistence in communities of color, was prematurely declared over, and a new, cleaner, whiter image of the gay movement was promulgated by the Human Rights Campaign and others. Prior to "the cocktail," HIV/AIDS threatened to popularize a conception of gay relationships as "promiscuous," "unstable" and "irresponsible." It was not only against the stigma of HIV/AIDS that a new, bourgeois model emerged to sanitize the public image of gay and lesbian people, but against the often multiracial coalitions fostered by AIDS activism that allied gay and lesbian people with transgender and intersex movements, drug users and queers of color who suffer heightened physical and economic vulnerability both in the United States and abroad.

We would be better off forging broad-based coalitions and supporting social agencies that seek to prevent suicide among gay and trans youth. We should be thinking about collective housing arrangements for aging queer and trans people for whom the wider community constitutes their main emotional and economic resource. We could be forging a new global coalition of AIDS activists, allying queers and communities of color, to combat the rise of HIV among people of color, especially women of color in the urban United States and in the global South. Why has the marriage bid taken the place of an activism that would prioritize educational outreach, combat profiteering drug companies and produce communities of support—reanimating ideals of radical kinship—across racial and sexual lines?

Gay marriage sets up a hierarchy between so-called legitimate intimate associations and those that should remain closeted, shamed or stigmatized. Those who are single, who have multiple partners or who negotiate relationships in ways that are unrecognizable by public norms or the state, are still innovating social relations outside the established marriage norm. Relationships that were once considered brave, if difficult, sociopolitical experiments now stand to be stigmatized, effaced or, indeed, deemed threatening to the monolithic priority of the movement. That very movement should, however, be capacious enough to demand legitimacy for an array of intimate and kinship arrangements that don't conform to the marital model.

Currently, thousands of gay people, exhilarated by the thought of legal recognition, forget their prior political commitments and their hopes for a social movement that exceeds the demand for this one legal right. They do not think about the history of property and race that has gone into the idealized version of the institution they are entering, and they do not consider what social forms of kinship they are delegitimizing along the way. If gay marriage promises health insurance, power of attorney and inheritance rights for one's partner, then perhaps we can consider an alternative political path. Instead of battling for gay marriage, we could be seeking legislation to guarantee healthcare to every citizen regardless of marital status, to separate power of attorney and inheritance from marital status and to leave marriage as a "symbolic" act that consenting adults might perform if they so wish.

Luckily, my lover of thirteen years, more a Marxist than I, threatens to divorce me if I try to marry her, so I'm not at risk. But the personal desires of those who want that symbolic status should not stand in the way of a broader alliance and political activism that furthers the needs of a community whose material and corporeal vulnerabilities remain seriously unaddressed. Along the way, we will be articulating an extended notion of kinship and community that goes far beyond what can be imagined from within the marriage norm.

Judith Butler is the author of Precarious Life: Powers of Mourning and Violence *(Verso).*

Susan Brownmiller

I JOKILY PREDICTED on a heated David Susskind show in 1971 that marriage would "wither away like the state." Seconds earlier the popular and utterly infuriating TV host had accused me of calling marriage a form of slavery. No, no, no. Other feminists, specifically Sheila Cronan and Ti-Grace Atkinson, had equated marriage with slavery, not I; but there was no way I could convince Susskind, who was wagging his finger, consulting his notes, insisting, "Yes, you did."

Trapped in a surreal television moment with a live studio audience, I had a little fun with Marxist theory and Mr. Susskind. Please understand that I was referencing Engels (*Anti-Dühring*, 1878), where the wither-away phrase regarding the eventual role of state power first appeared. (The notion that the state would wither after the advent of true socialism was elaborated on by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*, 1917.)

At the time I did not believe that either marriage or state was about to go into a fading act. Neither, quite frankly, did I expect to witness such a strong resurgence of these problematic institutions. Yet here we are today, living in an era when the vested interests in "state" and "marriage" are stronger than ever. These historically related phenomena and passionate conflicts are nothing to celebrate, in my estimation.

Heterosexual feminists of the 1970s had many differing opinions about marriage, whether it needed to be monogamous, whether it needed to be legalized by the state, but we basically agreed that the gut issue was equality—that is, childcare and housework had to be equally divided. We talked more about divorce, alimony, custody, child support and domestic violence than we did about sanctified union. No one I knew in that dress-down, bluejeans era ever dreamed of a wedding gown. No one I knew even wore a skirt. Romance and love? Hmmm, juicy subjects for analytical treatises on subtle but pervasive forms of oppression.

Who could have predicted today's turn of events? Who could have predicted a gay-rights lobbying group called the Log Cabin Republicans?

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A few of my friends decided to marry after the feminist movement, uh, withered. I didn't, probably less from conviction than from lack of opportunity, I imagine. Marriage was never one of my front-burner concerns.

Same-sex marriage boils down to property and inheritance rights, or, to use the current relevant terms, to medical benefits and Social Security. No problem there. When it veers into soppy sentiment about the state's affirmation of love and a lasting union, I think about prenuptial agreements, divorce rates and deadbeat dads.

Susan Brownmiller, best known for Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape *(1975), has just completed a comic novel.*

Michael Bronski

LIVING IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS—a city so committed to being in the vanguard of the right-to-marry movement that it opened the doors to City Hall at 12:01 AM Monday, May 17, to be the first municipality in the United States to issue state-sanctioned marriage licenses to queer couples—I feel that I am often in the eye of the same-sex marriage hurricane. While I have mixed feelings about the fight for same-sex marriage—which range from a 1960s gay liberation–instilled distrust of the institution to a cheerful acceptance that "equality under the law" has to be a good thing—there is one aspect of all this that drives me crazy. Now that many of my 40-60-year-old lesbian and gay male friends are getting hitched (many opting for the traditional wedding dinner and party they cannot afford), I wish them well. But I also wish they would be more honest about their motives.

My friends are, for the most part, women and men who have a history of political activism and who, even a decade ago, would have been dead set against looking for the state's imprimatur on their intimate relationships. Yet they are rushing to the altar. Sure, civil marriage will provide gay couples some benefits that are now granted to heterosexuals—but until the federal government recognizes same-sex marriage, the scope of these benefits is quite limited. The rush to the altar is so strong that I can only think there is another reason; despite their stated countercultural politics and commitment to lesbian-feminism and gay liberation, these friends have a deep-seated, sentimental attachment to traditional marriage, with all its emotional weight and social trappings.

Equally surprising to me is that, to a large degree, this is a gendered affair. In fact, close to 75 percent of marriages that have taken place (legally) in Boston and (illegally) in San Francisco have been between women. (In my extensive social and political circle of friends, I know of only two males couples who have decided to get hitched.) Clearly there is something about state-sanctioned marriage that is more appealing to lesbians, and probably women in general.

And why not? These are women who were raised on Barbie—that rubberized icon of femininity, whose most sublime apotheosis was as a beautiful Bride—and who were caught up in the first wave of commercial propaganda of the postwar Wedding Industry. Is there any doubt, in anyone's mind, that we live in a society that is completely dominated by a Marriage Culture that tells us from the age of consciousness that the only way to be happy is to be married? And that women are the primary targets of this cruel myth?

From my vantage, the fight for same-sex marriage is as much, if not more, about the brainwashing of Americans by the $70-billion-a-year Wedding Industry as it is about equal rights. Over the past sixty years it has been impossible for women and men—although most of the Wedding Industry's advertising is aimed at women—not to be affected by the over-the-top consumerism that has warped people's minds to make them believe that marriage is the only valid relationship. Sure, most of my friends are not buying $12,000 wedding dresses or $2,000 wedding cakes, but we are living in a political dream world if we don't believe that the intensive commercialism and consumerism that unites Marriage Culture to the Wedding Industry touches all of us. According to Cindy Sproul, co-owner of RainbowWeddingNetwork.com, an online wedding gift registry for gays, gay newlyweds want the same thing heterosexuals want. "They want to wear tuxes, they want to wear gowns, they want traditional weddings. They want the same things: a DJ, a florist, a caterer." Of course gay people, and especially lesbians, want to get married: They have been told to do so their entire lives by a culture that is hellbent on promoting a dyadic family unit and by a form of consumer capitalism that is as avaricious as it is overpowering.

Feminism has astutely dissected how the fashion and "glamour" industries have devastated women's lives. They have scrutinized how commercialism of all kinds has harmed women. Yet, as far as I can tell, the gay and lesbian community has refused to discuss how the Wedding Industry—from *Bride's* magazine to the newly minted "same-sex marriage greeting cards" that are selling briskly in gay bookstores—has influenced our lives. Marriage means many things to many people. But to willfully refuse to examine how marriage is deeply connected to—and propelled by—consumerism is both dangerous and destructive.

I am less worried about state-sanctioned marriage—there are some useful benefits here that are awarded to heterosexuals and not to same-sex couples—than I am about consumer-sanctioned marriage.

Michael Bronski is a writer, critic and journalist. His last book, Pulp Friction: Uncovering the Golden Age of Gay Male Pulp *(St. Martin's), was just awarded a Lammy Award for best anthology. A visiting professor in women and gender as well as Jewish studies at Dartmouth College, he has been active in the Gay Liberation Movement since 1969.*

E.J. Graff

THE KANKAKEE (IL) DAILY JOURNAL. The *Tuscaloosa* (Alabama) *News*. The *St. Petersburg* (Florida) *Times*. The Wilmington (North Carolina) *Star-News*. In the past year, these—and dozens of other local papers—have all run commentaries saying, essentially: "Yes, gay people should be able to pledge their vows. Yes, they should be considered next of kin and allowed to visit each other in the hospital. How the hell does any of that hurt me?"

OK, so that one's from a columnist in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*—arguably a major urban paper, like the *Dayton Daily News* and the *Baltimore Sun*, which have also run similiar articles. I've got a million of 'em from American cities and suburbs and exurbs, these columns and op-eds and letters to the editor, all of

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Professor Frederick Gregory (Ph.D., Harvard University) is Professor of History of Science at the University of Florida, where he has taught for 25 years. A past president of the History of Science Society of North America, Professor Gregory has a widely varied background that includes an undergraduate degree in mathematics, a degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and his Harvard doctorate in history of science. He also provided commentary for the American production of the television series "The Day the Universe Changed" and has won both undergraduate and graduate teaching awards.

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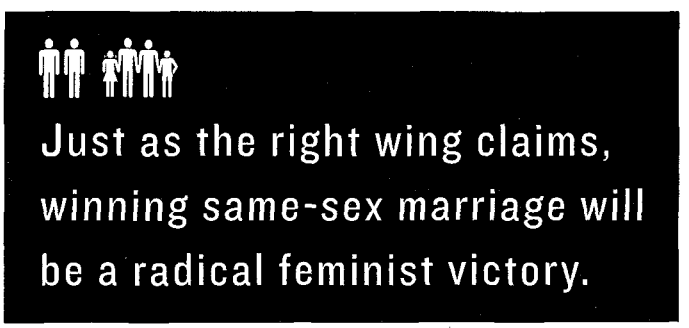
which echo (albeit less wittily) James Carville's quip: "I was against gay marriage until I found out I didn't have to have one."

This is not an outbreak of progressive sentiment; it's a fundamentally libertarian attitude, a pragmatic indifference toward life's variety. And it's come much faster than has happened for similar social movements in the past. Same-sex couples are especially easy to shrug at for three reasons. First, whichever homos you meet probably look a lot like you, sharing your ethnicity, workplace, religion, neighborhood, classroom or even your family. Second, they're not asking you to sacrifice anything: They're not demanding to be underwritten, like lazy welfare moms; they're not trying to dilute your political voice, like black voter wannabes in the South or legal aliens in New York City; they're not gunning for your job, like affirmative-action applicants; they're not shirking their god-given responsibilities, like working wives whining about the second shift.

And third, same-sex marriage (unlike married women's property or custody rights, or legal contraception, or no-fault divorce, or laws against marital rape and domestic violence) will change pretty much nothing about the institution. As I've argued here before, marriage's big changes were made between 1850 and 1970. Lesbians and gay men are just tagging along.



Why seek marriage then? Well, some lesbians and gay men (like their sibs) see it as the way to express love, and god bless 'em for it. More important, marriage is the only way Americans can designate a new adult next-of-kin (though more pragmatic countries offer other options). Civil marriage is a shared legal mailbox, a shorthand that tells institutions such as hospitals, jails, public housing officials, insurance companies, banks, probate courts, cemeteries, county coroners—and more—that you two have designated each other as primary. That's essential for resolving the inevitable spats over who counts to whom in crises of disease, disaster, divorce or death. Unlike any alternatives, the irreplaceable M-word is understood worldwide.

Of course, many Americans remain profoundly ambivalent, queasily holding two opposing ideas at the same time. On the one hand, they have that deep American belief that only equal is equal. On the other hand, they think—as the spring break T-shirt put it a few years ago—"Silly faggot, dix are for chix!" When pollsters asked this year whether Americans support a federal marriage amendment, guess what percentage said yes: 6? 47? 59? Correct answer: All of the above, in Pew Research, *Newsweek* and CBS polls, respectively. That's because each phrases the question differently, coaxing forth a different one of those two contradictory beliefs.

Still, the direction in which opinion is moving, year after year, is obvious even to Ralph Reed. Give us twenty years, or maybe even ten. By the time we win full marriage rights, the only people who will notice will be lesbians and gay men and their families. No one else will care.

And yet, just as the right wing claims, winning same-sex marriage will be a radical feminist victory. By gender-neutralizing marriage's entrance requirements—the last such sex-based rule left in the institution after 150 years of feminist transformation—same-sex marriage will more deeply inscribe our culture's legal endorsement of spousal (and sexual) equality.

Is marriage perfect? Hardly. So progressives (not just gay folks!) must tackle such essential tasks as disentangling health insurance from employment or spousal status and insuring that children have more economic and social supports than just the too-tight nuclear family, which so often explodes into radioactive waste. Just because homos are winning the marriage wars doesn't mean the left can go take a nap.

E.J. Graff, author of the recently reissued What Is Marriage For? The Strange Social History of Our Most Intimate Institution *(Beacon), is a Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center visiting scholar.*

Michael Eric Dyson

A LOT OF BLACK FOLKS ARE ANGRY that gay folks want to get married, and that they're using the civil rights movement as grounds to justify their efforts. Well, as a straight, ordained Baptist minister and activist intellectual, I fully support gays and lesbians who want to get hitched. First of all, black folks should be the last on earth to tell anybody when and under what conditions they should or shouldn't be married. Not long ago, we were jumping a broom to sanctify marriages that weren't recognized by the state. Then, only yesterday, our unions to folks outside our race weren't recognized in many states across the nation. That should give us pause as we remonstrate against gays who want to walk down the aisle in utter commitment to one another. (Plus, doesn't it seem odd that some of the loudest voices in opposition to marriage rise from religious leaders who couldn't keep their vows of fidelity if Jesus were in their bedrooms? Alas, I'm not casting any stones, since I can't afford to; I'm just underscoring an obvious hypocrisy.)

As for gay folks hijacking the language of civil rights to further their goals, it's just fine with me. To be sure, racial segregation and homophobia are historically distinct, if overlapping, phenomena. Today, gays and lesbians on average make a whole lot more money than blacks, and their ability to masquerade and hide their identities is far greater than for most blacks. And there are some gays and lesbians who are downright racist. (But isn't that one of the points to be made here—that being gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual doesn't exempt one from the passions and pitfalls that befall the rest of us?) Still, black folks can't deny that the ability to marry whomever one chooses is a civil rights issue, one not best left to high-minded moralists. Our feathers needn't be ruffled by gays and lesbians who seek to tie the knot of matrimony. In fact, heterosexual Christians should applaud the desire of gays and lesbians to seal their sexual and spiritual solidarity with a nod to traditional family values. Now mind you, those traditional family values have led to destructive consequences in many homes, but the desire of gays and les-

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bians to sign up has given me fresh hope that it needn't be so.

Ain't that a trip? Oops, I'm so sorry to have descended to Ebonics to make my point, especially since Bill Cosby, on the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board*, assailed lower-income black families—like the one I made as a teen father on welfare—for the verbal pathology of black English. Come to think of it, Cosby's recent assault on poor black families, which echoes decades of assaults on the black family, from the Moynihan Report to welfare reform, is much more dangerous to us—and should cause far more sustained outcry from black folks—than two loving people who happen to be gay or lesbian committing to each other in the hope of bolstering the value of all families.

Michael Eric Dyson is professor of humanities and religious studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

Judith Stacey

FAMILY-VALUES CRUSADER JAMES DOBSON warns that "for more than forty years the homosexual activist movement has sought to implement a master plan that has had as its centerpiece the utter destruction of the family." To the familiar slippery-slope jeremiads that same-sex marriage "will lead inexorably" to polygamy, group marriage and incest, Dobson adds the specter of marriage "between adults and children" and "between a man and his donkey." Such apocalyptic rhetoric from opponents signals their desperation.

Gay marriage is a *fait accompli*. It was no joke on April 1, 2001, when the Netherlands became the first nation to ratify this irreversible, world-historic family transformation. Same-sex marriage seems likely in Catholic France, and possibly in Spain and areas of the global South. Now it is legal in Massachusetts, the original Puritan colony.

A *fait accompli*—but what will be *accompli*, for whom, and at whose expense remains to be determined by political struggles. Ironically, feminists and gay liberationists find ourselves defending gay marriage against the conservative backlash. For although only a handful of conservatives like David Brooks and Andrew Sullivan seem to get it, marriage is a conservative institution, no matter the gender mix of mates. It favors the interests of the propertied and privileged. That is why marital stability correlates with employment, income and education, particularly for men. Admitting same-sex couples to this primarily bourgeois club will likely intensify discrimination against the unmarried and their kin—the explicit goal of marriage-promotion campaigns now directed at welfare recipients. It will replace sexual-orientation discrimination with even harsher discrimination by marital status.

Paradoxically, virulent right-wing resistance to gay marriage opens a door for promoting more democratic scenarios. An unlikely hopeful prospect appeared in April. Paul Loscocco, a Republican state representative in Massachusetts, and Deborah Glick, a progressive Democratic assemblywoman in New York City, both recognized that sharing the name of marriage with gays incites more opposition than conferring its benefits. Both proposed taking their states out of the marriage business entirely and offering "civil unions for all" instead. "We in the legislature," Loscocco explained, "have the power to call what has commonly been known as marriage anything we want. We could pick the word liverwurst if we wanted to."

Perhaps as startling, self-described "marriage nut" David Blankenhorn expressed support for the proposal: "I've spent my whole public life arguing that marriage is an important public institution in the interest of children, but we may have reached a point in our society where we can no longer sustain a common legal definition." I agree, and with less regret. If one size of family never did fit all, never has the reality of family diversity been more apparent. A progressive family agenda should support not just gay unions but the many-colored rainbow of de facto families in our midst. It should challenge discrimination against the unmarried and advocate equal treatment for "all our families." Public policy should foster care-giving and commitment in creative shapes, sizes and colors. We could borrow a maple leaf here from our northern neighbors. In 2001 the Canadian government published *Beyond Conjugality*, an inspirational blueprint for this enlightened agenda.

The liverwurst solution allows progressives and conservatives an uncommon opportunity to forge common ground seeking to fortify the thinning blue line between church and state. Churches would remain free to define, discriminate and demand whatever prerequisites for entering marriage they choose. States, as Loscocco declares, should be free to affix whatever label they fancy, including liverwurst, to legal recognition for intimate bonds. Personally, "civil union" strikes me as an excellent, even a lofty, term for starters. Imagine a state that fostered civility and union in its challenged families and nation. Decidedly more appetizing than liverwurst!

Judith Stacey is on the faculty of sociology and at the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University. A founding member of the Council of Contemporary Families, her current research focuses on gay family issues.

JoAnn Wypijewski

CAN MARRIAGE BE SAVED? Why, it's saved every day, the good old-fashioned way, by divorce and adultery.

The mistake is in believing those things to be outside the marriage system, spanners in the works or, from another angle, bold, "transgressive" enunciations of sexual liberation. Of course household to household, divorce or adultery may mean any of that. There are real tears and sighs of relief among that 50 percent of straight married couples who dissolve their contracts, and real excitement (tears can come later) among the majority who tryst in spite of vows. For capital-M marriage, though, they are beside the point. Divorce saves the institution of marriage the way an escape clause saves the institution of the business deal, freeing the partners, in the bargain...for another marriage. I'll never forget a feminist friend explaining, among the positives of her divorce, that her little daughter, who at the time liked nothing better than to play bride, would not have to endure the example of a loveless marriage spoiling her own dreams of a white wedding and the happy-ever-after.

No one talks this way about adultery. It promises no new beginnings, no second chance for monogamy, for the "good marriage" this time, with the good wife and good husband in which no one is

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ever insecure, ever needy beyond the embrace of home, ever even intrigued; in which everyone is happy, while happiness wreaks its impossible demands. Yet adultery rarely brings absolute rupture. Most adulterers don't leave home for wedded bliss with their lover.

What adultery brings is something harder, a confrontation with the lie and, beyond the bric-a-brac of forbidden love, with plain old desire in a monogamy system in which sex is currency, withheld as punishment, doled out as reward, or sometimes just another thing on a To Do list that is already too long.

Of course, the lie is more comforting than its unmasking, and so the "other woman," ghoul of married women's fears, is a horned thing, symbol of failure, delusion, selfishness. The dark angel, she is as necessary to the totem of the ideal wife as hellfire is to heaven. But is it reasonable, or just an article of faith in the marriage religion, that apostates must all be cynics or manipulators? A woman I know, single, 50-ish and by chance or design long involved with married men, answered the question this way:

"The fact is a lot of us are single and the longer we insist on that the smaller the pool becomes of single interesting men.

The 'other woman' is as necessary to the totem of the ideal wife as hellfire is to heaven.

Now, the boxes lined up conventionally for someone like me are celibacy, computer dating, husband-hunting, broken heart. No thank you. So I see these men, and let's just say we engage in a free love. I don't expect them to leave their wives. I want their interest and their care, intimately, mentally, and I offer them the same. They go home to their wives. I don't know what they say or do about that, and it's not my business. They love their wives, or need them, or need their families, or need the image of themselves that comes along with twenty-five years of marriage or whatever even if love is dead, and maybe it was never alive in the first place. Or maybe it's good, but how much can it give? Life demands a lot, you know, and sometimes a person just needs to be weak. Or just needs, wants, a different kind of loving. We act as if comfort were evil—and curiosity, God forbid! For the time that I'm with these men I know something deep and loving occurs. Apart from everything else, I am their intimate friend. We're talking years here. The Dr. Phils of the world would say that I'm a fool. The gay men I know get it completely. The women mostly I don't discuss this with. It isn't perfect, but nothing is. And I'd be lying to say I never want for more. In the pie-in-the-sky there's always the 'great love,' the soul mate and comrade and lover combined. It's a wish; it happens or it doesn't, and, let's face it, most of the time it doesn't. But we live in a tyranny of the couple. Only single people understand this. And I guess what I resent most is the assumption that there is only one way for love, and if you haven't found it, or if your man 'strays' or if you are the one he's 'straying' with, then you've failed. I don't think these guys' wives have failed any more than I think the men have or I have. The supposed experts on love can hawk all the stuff they want about commitment, denial, avoidance, and people can lap it up and repeat it back to their single friends and their children. But at the end of the day there're all these broken marriages, all these broken hearts, all these needs unmet. The rules for love everlasting are a bit like the rules for making it in the opportunity society, where really nothing is equal and nothing is fair."

Maybe instead of asking whether marriage can be saved, we might think about how love is achieved, and not just couple-love, contract-love, but love in common too?

JoAnn Wypijewski is a writer in New York City.

Hilton Als

MY BEST FRIEND DIED IN 1990. This is the first time that I have been able to type, let alone say, those words. We met at Columbia University in 1981. That was the year a report surfaced in the *New York Times* about a mysterious "gay" cancer that was claiming a number of lives—lives that seemed to have very little to do with ours, which were lived among the groves of metropolitan academic pretension. Barthes was big, but our very own Professor Karl-Ludwig Selig was bigger. He offered a course on Pasolini, whose epic film about the degradation of the soul, *Salò*, was being screened at night. Columbia was a boys' school then. Together we sat in our tweed jackets, chinos and penny loafers, watching Pasolini's critique of marriage, fascism and the lengths to which perversity takes us, in mind, body and language. In the film, the most beautiful couple—both virgins, a boy and girl barely out of adolescence—are married by a salacious "priest," and then "defiled" by two older members of the cabal. The old man takes the young boy, and a hardened whore takes the young girl. It is a terrible moment, filled with lilies.

I don't recall if I saw this film with my friend or not, but it was certainly among the films that we discussed at the time. I can't imagine what it meant to us then, before we had married one another in our hearts, but I'm sure the effect of the film was terrifying. After we finished the school year (he graduated and I did not), we both got jobs working in the art history departments of Columbia and Barnard, respectively. Every day, after work, he came over to the Barnard side of the campus where I worked. He'd slip out of his loafers and put his big white feet on my desk as he read the paper and smoked (you could smoke in offices then). He had just broken up with his first boyfriend. One afternoon, as we walked to the subway, I told him how much I loved him, and forever. I suppose it was a marriage proposal of sorts. We never discussed it, but the promise of that afternoon never left us.

I have never been interested in public vows of affection. I have never, to my knowledge, ever left my friend, in spirit or mind, even after his death. I can't imagine that if we had stood up in a room full of people and exchanged words of fidelity in front of a priest that it would have been much different than what we knew we were to one another: partners for life.

Hilton Als, a staff writer for The New Yorker, *is the author of* The Women *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux).*

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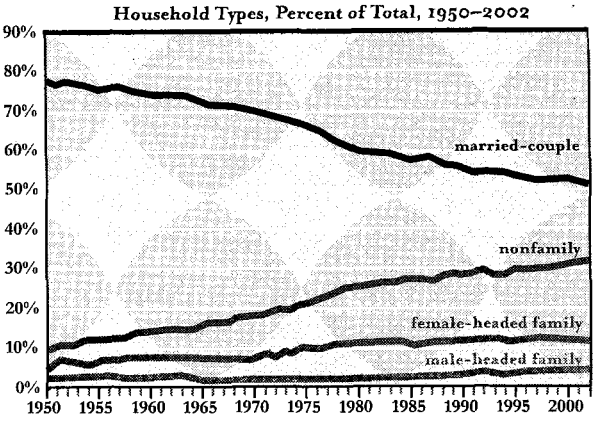
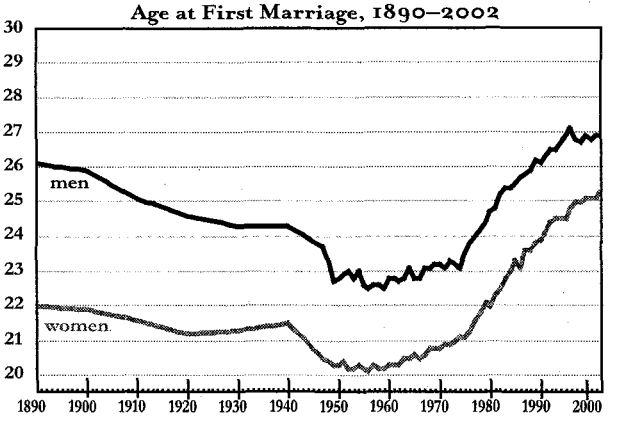
MARRIAGE INDICATORS / DOUG HENWOOD

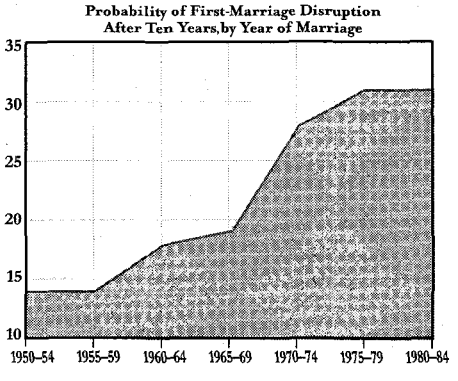
Hooking Up, Shacking Up, Splitting Up...

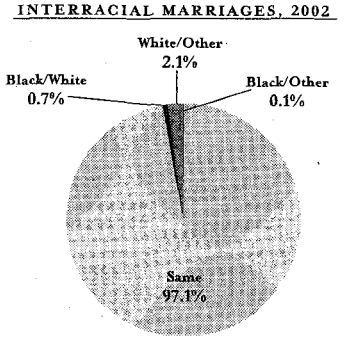
Though it's still thought of as the norm, the married-couple household has been shrinking steadily as a share of the national population, to the point where only a little over half of US households (52 percent) are of the supposedly dominant type. Nearly a third (32 percent) of households are of the "nonfamily" type by official definition. By unofficial definition, 5.2 percent identified as "unmarried partner households," 4.6 percent of the opposite sex and 0.6 percent of the same sex (though you have to wonder how honest people are about this). Interracial marriages are surprisingly rare, though the rates have doubled over the past couple of decades. People are also waiting longer to get married; the age has been rising steadily since the 1960s. But the early marriages of the 1950s, taken as the ideal in traditionalist circles, look like a historical anomaly.

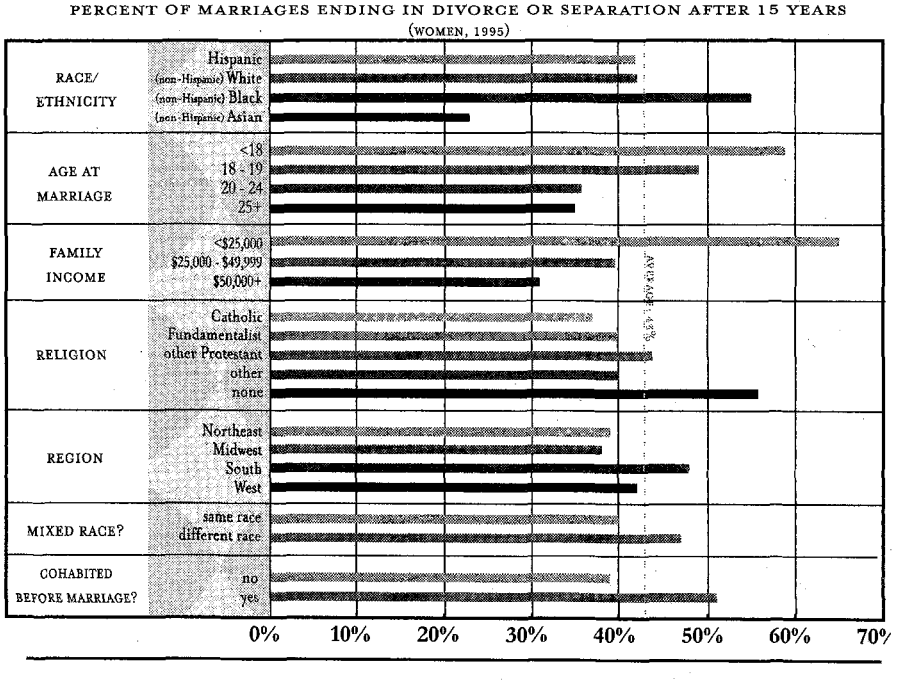
Approximately half of marriages end in divorce, a rate that appears to have stabilized in recent years after sharp increases in the 1970s and '80s. Fewer than 15 percent of couples married in the 1950s were divorced or separated ten years later; in recent years, the share is close to a third. Being poor, young, black or nonreligious puts you at greater risk of divorce—as does living in the South. The states of the Old Confederacy have a divorce rate 23 percent higher than the rest of the country (4.8 vs. 3.9 per thousand persons). The "red" states—those carried by Bush in 2000—have a divorce rate 29 percent higher than the "blue" (Gore) states (4.5 vs. 3.5 per thousand). Makes you wonder about family values.











Sources: National Center for Health Statistics (marriage disruption statistics); US Census Bureau (all other statistics); research assistance: Laura Starecheski

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Sacred Rite or Civil Right?

Gay marriage shows why we need to separate church & state.

Rev. Howard Moody

If members of the church that I served for more than three decades were told I would be writing an article in defense of marriage, they wouldn't believe it. My reputation was that when people came to me for counsel about getting married, I tried to talk them out of it. More about that later.

We are now in the midst of a national debate on the nature of marriage, and it promises to be as emotional and polemical as the issues of abortion and homosexuality have been over the past century. What all these debates have in common is that they involved both the laws of the state and the theology of the church. The purpose of this writing is to suggest that the gay-marriage debate is less about the legitimacy of the loving relationship of a same-sex couple than about the relationship of church and state and how they define marriage.

In Western civilization, the faith and beliefs of Christendom played a major role in shaping the laws regarding social relations and moral behavior. Having been nurtured in the Christian faith from childhood and having served a lifetime as an ordained Baptist minister, I feel obligated first to address the religious controversy concerning the nature of marriage. If we look at the history of religious institutions regarding marriage we will find not much unanimity but amazing diversity—it is really a mixed bag. Those who base their position on "tradition" or "what the Bible says" will find anything but clarity. It depends on which "tradition" in what age reading from whose holy scriptures.

In the early tradition of the Jewish people, there were multiple wives and not all of them equal. Remember the story of Abraham's wives, Sara and Hagar. Sara couldn't get pregnant, so Hagar presented Abraham with a son. When Sara got angry with Hagar, she forced Abraham to send Hagar and her son Ishmael into the wilderness. In case Christians feel superior about their "tradition" of marriage, I would remind them that their scriptural basis is not as clear about marriage as we might hope. We have Saint Paul's conflicting and condescending words about the institution: "It's better not to marry." Karl Barth called this passage the Magna Carta of the single person. (Maybe we should have taken Saint Paul's advice more seriously. It might have prevented an earlier generation of parents from harassing, cajoling and prodding our young until they were married.) In certain religious branches, the church doesn't recognize the licensed legality of marriage but requires that persons meet certain religious qualifications before the marriage is recognized by the church. For members of the Roman Catholic Church, a "legal divorce" and the right to remarry may not be recognized unless the first marriage has been declared null and void by a decree of the church. It is clear that there is no single religious view of marriage and that history has witnessed some monumental changes in the way "husband and wife" are seen in the relationship of marriage.

In my faith-based understanding, if freedom of choice means anything to individuals (male or female), it means they have several options. They can be single and celibate without being thought of as strange or psychologically unbalanced. They can be single and sexually active without being labeled loose or immoral. Women can be single with child without being thought of as unfit or inadequate. If these choices had been real options, the divorce rate may never have reached nearly 50 percent.

The other, equally significant choice for people to make is that of lifetime commitment to each other and to seal that desire in the vows of a wedding ceremony. That understanding of marriage came out of my community of faith. In my years of ministry I ran a tight ship in regard to the performance of weddings. It wasn't because I didn't believe in marriage (I've been married for sixty years and have two wonderful offspring) but rather my unease about the way marriage was used to force people to marry so they wouldn't be "living in sin."

The failure of the institution can be seen in divorce statistics. I wanted people to know how challenging the promise of those vows were and not to feel this was something they had to do. My first question in premarital counseling was, "Why do you want to get married and spoil a beautiful friendship?" That question often elicited a thoughtful and emotional answer. Though I was miserly in the number of weddings I performed, I always made exceptions when there were couples who had difficulty finding clergy who would officiate. Their difficulty was because they weren't of the same religion, or they had made marital mistakes, or what they couldn't believe. Most of them were "ecclesiastical outlaws," barred from certain sacraments in the church of their choice.

The church I served had a number of gay and lesbian couples who had been together for many years, but none of them had asked for public weddings or blessings on their relationship. (There was one commitment ceremony for a gay couple at the end of my tenure.) It was as though they didn't need a piece of paper or a ritual to symbolize their lifelong commitment. They knew if they wanted a religious ceremony, their ministers would officiate and our religious community would joyfully witness.

It was my hope that since the institution of marriage had been used to exclude and demean members of the homosexual community, our church, which was open and affirming, would create with gays and lesbians a new kind of ceremony. It would be an occasion that symbolized, between two people of the same gender, a covenant of intimacy of two people to journey together, breaking

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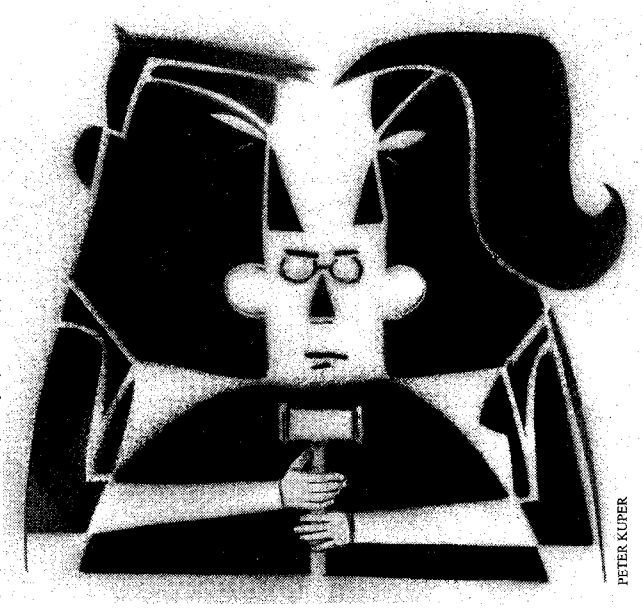
new ground in human relationships—an alternative to marriage as we have known it.

However, I can understand why homosexuals want "to be married" in the old-fashioned "heterosexual way." After all, most gays and lesbians were born of married parents, raised in a family of siblings; many were nourished in churches and synagogues, taught about a living God before Whom all Her creatures were equally loved. Why wouldn't they conceive their loving relationships in terms of marriage and family and desire that they be confirmed and understood as such? It follows that if these gays and lesbians see their relationship as faith-based, they would want a religious ceremony that seals their intentions to become lifelong partners, lovers and friends, that they would want to be "married."



PETER KUPER

Even though most religious denominations deny this ceremony to homosexual couples, more and more clergy are, silently and publicly, officiating at religious rituals in which gays and lesbians declare their vows before God and a faith community. One Catholic priest who defied his church's ban said: "We can bless a dog, we can bless a boat, but we can't say a prayer over two people who love each other. You don't have to call it marriage, you can call it a deep and abiding friendship, but you can bless it."

We have the right to engage in "religious disobedience" to the regulations of the judicatory that granted us the privilege to officiate at wedding ceremonies, and suffer the consequences. However, when it comes to civil law, it is my contention that the church and its clergy are on much shakier ground in defying the law.

In order to fully understand the conflict that has arisen in this debate over the nature of marriage, it is important to understand the difference between the religious definition of marriage and the state's secular and civil definition. The government's interest is in a legal definition of marriage—a social and voluntary contract between a man and woman in order to protect money, property and children. Marriage is a civil union without benefit of clergy or religious definition. The state is not interested in why two people are "tying the knot," whether it's to gain money, secure a dynasty or raise children. It may be hard for those of us who have a religious or romantic view of marriage to realize that loveless marriages are not that rare. Before the Pill, pregnancy was a frequent motive for getting married. The state doesn't care what the commitment of two people is, whether it's for life or as long as both of you love, whether it's sexually monogamous or an open marriage. There is nothing spiritual, mystical or romantic about the state's license to marry—it's a legal contract.

Thus, George W. Bush is right when he says that "marriage is a sacred institution" when speaking as a Christian, as a member of his Methodist church. But as President of the United States and leader of all Americans, believers and unbelievers, he is wrong. What will surface in this debate as litigation and court decisions multiply is the history of the conflict between the church and the state in defining the nature of marriage. That history will become significant as we move toward a decision on who may be married.

After Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in AD 325, the church maintained absolute control over the regulation of marriage for some 1,000 years. Beginning in the sixteenth century, English kings (especially Henry VIII, who found the inability to get rid of a wife extremely oppressive) and other monarchs in Europe began to wrest control from the church over marital regulations. Ever since, kings, presidents and rulers of all kinds have seen how important the control of marriage is to the regulation of social order. In this nation, the government has always been in charge of marriage.

That is why it was not a San Francisco mayor licensing same-sex couples that really threatened the President's religious understanding of marriage but rather the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, declaring marriage between same-sex couples a constitutional right, that demanded a call for constitutional amendment. I didn't understand how important that was until I read an op-ed piece in the *Boston Globe* by Peter Gomes, professor of Christian morals and the minister of Memorial Church at Harvard University, that reminds us of a seminal piece of our history:

> The Dutch made civil marriage the law of the land in 1590, and the first marriage in New England, that of Edward Winslow to the widow Susannah White, was performed on May 12, 1621, in Plymouth by Governor William Bradford, in exercise of his office as magistrate.
>
> There would be no clergyman in Plymouth until the arrival of the Rev. Ralph Smith in 1629, but even then marriage would continue to be a civil affair, as these first Puritans opposed the English custom of clerical marriage as unscriptural. Not until 1692, when Plymouth Colony was merged into that of Massachusetts Bay, were the clergy authorized by the new province to solemnize marriages. To this day in the Commonwealth the clergy, including those of the archdiocese, solemnize marriage legally as agents of the Commonwealth and by its civil authority. Chapter 207 of the General Laws of Massachusetts tells us who may perform such ceremonies.

Now even though it is the civil authority of the state that defines the rights and responsibilities of marriage and therefore *who* can be married, the state is no more infallible than the church in its judgments. It wasn't until the mid-twentieth century that the Supreme Court declared antimiscegenation laws unconstitutional. Even after that decision, many mainline churches, where I started my ministry, unofficially discouraged interracial marriages, and many of my colleagues were forbidden to perform such weddings.

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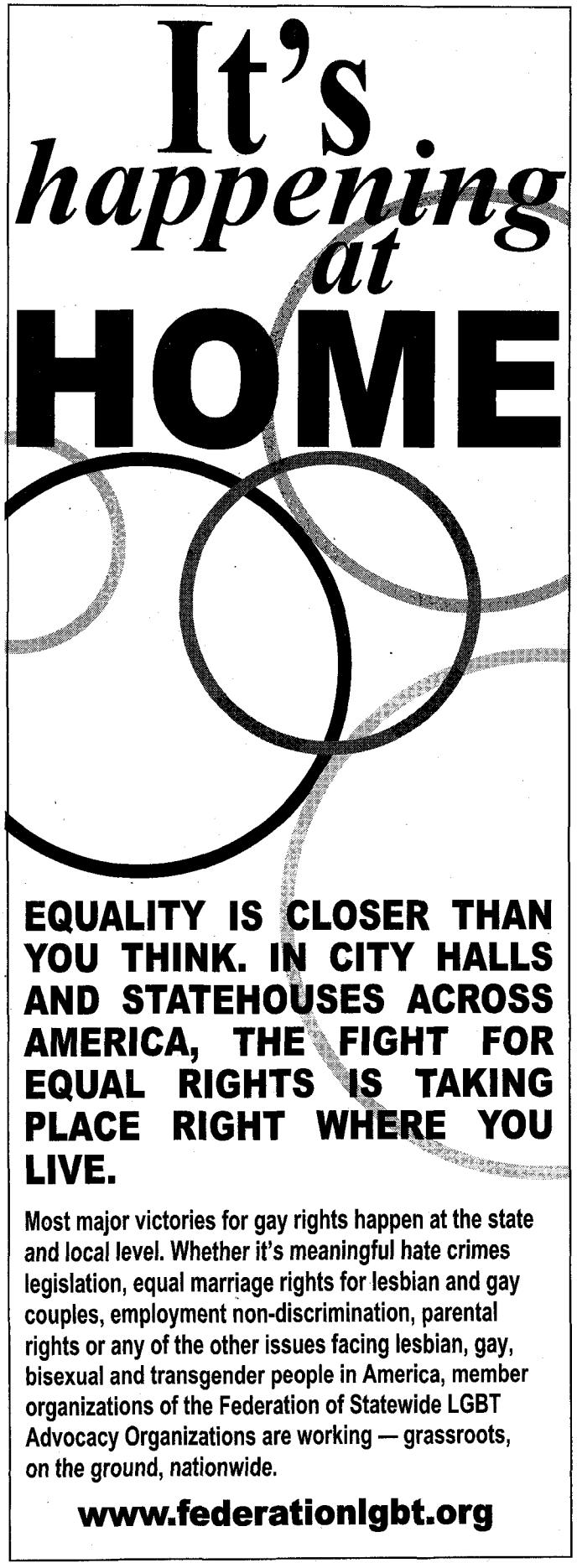
It's happening at HOME
EQUALITY IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK. IN CITY HALLS AND STATEHOUSES ACROSS AMERICA, THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS IS TAKING PLACE RIGHT WHERE YOU LIVE.
Most major victories for gay rights happen at the state and local level. Whether it's meaningful hate crimes legislation, equal marriage rights for lesbian and gay couples, employment non-discrimination, parental rights or any of the other issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in America, member organizations of the Federation of Statewide LGBT Advocacy Organizations are working — grassroots, on the ground, nationwide.
www.federationlgbt.org

The civil law view of marriage has as much historical diversity as the church's own experience because, in part, the church continued to influence the civil law. Although it was the Bible that made "the husband the head of his wife," it was common law that "turned the married pair legally into one person—the husband," as Nancy Cott documents in her book *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (an indispensable resource for anyone seeking to understand the changing nature of marriage in the nation's history). She suggests that "the legal doctrine of marital unity was called *coverture*...[which] meant that the wife could not use legal avenues such as suits or contracts, own assets, or execute legal documents without her husband's collaboration." This view of the wife would not hold water in any court in the land today.

As a matter of fact, even in the religious understanding of President Bush and his followers, allowing same-sex couples the right to marry seems a logical conclusion. If marriage is "the most fundamental institution of civilization" and a major contributor to the social order in our society, why would anyone want to shut out homosexuals from the "glorious attributes" of this "sacred institution"? Obviously, the only reason one can discern is that the opponents believe that gay and lesbian people are not worthy of the benefits and spiritual blessings of "marriage."

At the heart of the controversy raging over same-sex marriage is the religious and constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. All of us can probably agree that there was never a solid wall of separation, riddled as it is with breaches. The evidence of that is seen in the ambiguity of tax-free religious institutions, "in God we trust" printed on our money and "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance to our country. All of us clergy, who are granted permission by the state to officiate at legal marriage ceremonies, have already compromised the "solid wall" by signing the license issued by the state. I would like to believe that my authority to perform religious ceremonies does not come from the state but derives from the vows of ordination and my commitment to God. I refuse to repeat the words, "by the authority invested in me by the State of New York, I pronounce you husband and wife," but by signing the license, I've become the state's "handmaiden."

It seems fitting therefore that we religious folk should now seek to sharpen the difference between ecclesiastical law and civil law as we beseech the state to clarify who can be married by civil law. Further evidence that the issue of church and state is part of the gay-marriage controversy is that two Unitarian ministers have been arrested for solemnizing unions between same-sex couples when no state licenses were involved. Ecclesiastical law may punish those clergy who disobey marital regulations, but the state has no right to invade church practices and criminalize clergy under civil law. There should have been a noisy outcry from all churches, synagogues and mosques at the government's outrageous contravention of the sacred principle of the "free exercise of religion."

I come from a long line of Protestants who believe in a "free church in a free state." In the issue before this nation, the civil law is the determinant of the regulation of marriage, regardless of our religious views, and the Supreme Court will finally decide what the principle of equality means in our Constitution in the third century of our life together as a people. It is likely that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will probably lead the na-

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tion on this matter, as the State of New York led to the Supreme Court decision to allow women reproductive freedom.

So what is marriage? It depends on whom you ask, in what era, in what culture. Like all words or institutions, human definitions, whether religious or secular, change with time and history. When our beloved Constitution was written, blacks, Native Americans and, to some extent, women were quasi-human beings with no rights or privileges, but today they are recognized as persons with full citizenship rights. The definition of marriage has been changing over the centuries in this nation, and it will change yet again as homosexuals are seen as ordinary human beings.

In time, and I believe that time is now, we Americans will see that all the fears foisted on us by religious zealots were not real. Heterosexual marriage will still flourish with its statistical failures. The only difference will be that some homosexual couples will join them and probably account for about the same number of failed relationships. And we will discover that it did not matter whether the couples were joined in a religious ceremony or a secular and civil occasion for the statement of their intentions. ◆

The Wedding March

Gay nuptials combine pomp and protest.

Alisa Solomon

"Get down, get down!" a voice yelled from the back of the crowd at a mid-March wedding in New York City, and a chorus of others soon took up the call. These were not the cries of partyers going wild on the dance floor, but the irritated admonitions of some fifty newspaper photographers and TV camera folk trying to get celebrants to duck under the frame of their shots. One cable guy elbowed his way forward so aggressively that he almost pushed a few wedding guests into Ruth Finkelstein and B.C. Craig's *chuppah*. Gazing intently into each other's eyes, the two brides didn't seem to notice.

That misty morning, they were one of three same-sex pairs solemnizing their commitments on the steps of City Hall to protest the state's refusal to grant them marriage licenses and express support for the mayor of New Paltz, Jason West, and two Unitarian ministers, who had been charged with misdemeanors in the Hudson Valley town for pronouncing dozens of couples wife-and-wife or husband-and-husband. Reached for comment, Mayor Michael Bloomberg told the press that the demonstrators should have taken their rites to Albany, since state laws were their target. "I think this is more theater than anything else," he said.

Effective mass protest has always employed histrionics, of course, but there are other important—and even radical—ways in which Bloomberg was essentially right. Like other public demonstrations, the astonishing nuptial insurgency that spread across the country this year offered an effective mix of sympathetic characters, engaging narrative, fabulous spectacle and sassy rebuke. No matter what you think about marriage as a political goal, there is no denying that these "wedding marches" produced a stirring display of queer desire and anti-Bush defiance. What's more, pointing at the gap between the symbolic ritual of a wedding and the legal, contractual fact of marriage, the protests exposed the tenuousness of the tie between rites and rights—and the vigorous social and cultural forces called out to defend it.

The festive two-by-two queues for licenses in San Francisco, the busloads of betrothed in Phoenix, the exuberant exchanges of vows in Portland, all these proliferating images of the love that once dared not speak its name refusing to shut up shifted the ground of the gay-marriage debate. Favorable rulings from judges have been won by particular couples bringing lawsuits, but the crowds of wedded wannabes, from long-term lovers to the newly smitten, have taken the issue out of the courthouses and into the streets. Like the first gay pride parades, which made the personal step of coming out political by multiplying and flaunting it, the mass rush to the altar over the past six months has turned the relatively private and intimate act of matrimony into a collective action staged for a mass public. (In contrast to the parades, though, which polymorphously present myriad versions of queerness, the marriage demos constrict gay visibility, excluding those who reject nuclear couplehood.)

Meanwhile, the city officials who rebelled against laws and practices they regard as discriminatory revived a dramatic form of direct-action civil disobedience: Like racially integrated lunch-counter sit-ins, the issuing of the licenses accomplishes the very deed whose outlawing the protests seek to undo. Such stagings of possibility are always compelling. In today's parched political landscape they came like a quenching rain. Even people not particularly invested in gay marriage couldn't help getting caught up when renegade mayors and town clerks boldly asserted local authority and brazenly resisted the crushing narrowness of Right-Wing America. Hundreds of straight folks poured into San Francisco's City Hall to volunteer as witnesses or help hasten the paperwork. Others passed trays of steaming coffee along the line of couples waiting hours in the February rain. Cars driving by honked their congrats. Taxis offered "free rides for newlyweds." All were getting in on the giddying opportunity to stand outside the Republican frame. In this context, even among leftists and feminists suspicious of the marital enterprise, whether one actually wanted a queer marriage license became almost beside the point—about as relevant as whether those lunch-counter protesters really wanted to eat the food at Woolworth's.

The pageantry played in Peoria—and drew all those photogra-

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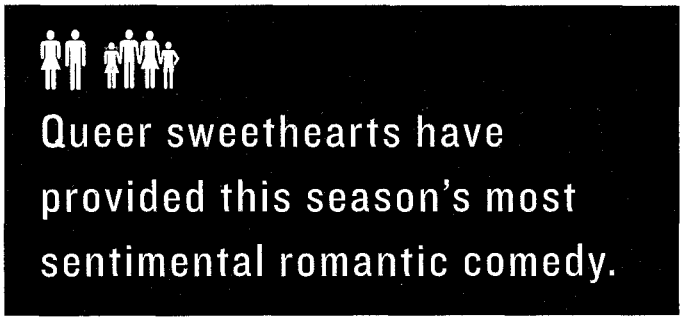
phers to New York's City Hall—for another irresistible reason: The story follows an enduring, endearing narrative. For centuries, from ancient Roman comedy to *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, lovers have been overcoming recalcitrant parents and progressing toward the triumph of a marital finale. Gay men and lesbians seeking to tie the knot in one stubborn county after another re-enact this familiar wedding plot again and again. In turn, the state, blustering about the end of civilization like the swaggering capitano of the commedia dell'arte, plays the villainous authority who thwarts the inamorati. The public is well practiced in whom to root for. At a time when tabloid headlines and reality TV shows make a nightly travesty of eternal devotion and connubial bliss, queer sweethearts have provided the season's most sincere and sentimental romantic comedy. This trope is tricky, though, as it has both radical and depoliticizing potential.

Far from the sex-affirming, multiple-partner kiss-ins ACT UP organized in the early years of the AIDS crisis, today's affinity groups of the affianced place themselves within this recognizable story of amorous fulfillment. Like Shakespearean lovers who have fled to the forest to evade the constraints of the court, where they were not allowed to marry the person of their choosing, they return to city halls all over the country to affirm both their love and their rightful place in the larger community. If the authorities don't give in—as in *Romeo and Juliet*—tragedy results (possibly forcing the rigid parental figures to reassess the rules that denied the lovers in the first place). But in comedy, as Puck might say, "Jill shall have Jill/Nought shall go ill": The dukes and kings reliably relent and all are recuperated within the slightly adjusted yet restored social order.



Laying claim to this narrative, queer spousal supplicants have displaced the once-dominant images of their community as perverts and predators. The dildo-wagging drag queens and leather-clad revelers featured in the 1990s antigay propaganda film *The Gay Agenda* inflamed groups like the Traditional Families Coalition, who warned in their fundraising letters, "They want your children." But the imagery glowing into living rooms today cannot whip up that particular anxiety. The marriage demonstrators make no demands, for example, that school curriculums include queer material or that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender teachers be protected from job discrimination. Rather, they seek public equality in the traditionally private realm of family.

Indeed, what ignites the religious right's wrath today is precisely the acceptability of these heartwarming scenes. As Massachusetts began issuing licenses to same-sex couples in May, some backers of a state constitutional amendment restricting marriage to a man and a woman told the press they feared that the very sight of gay weddings would make the public more tolerant of homosexuality. Some haven't been able to resist the universal theme of love themselves. Ray McNulty, a spokesperson for the antigay Massachusetts Family Institute, advised that opponents take their complaints to lawmakers, not to queer couples. "As far as I'm concerned," he was quoted saying on May 17, "give those people their happiness for the day."

Some liberals, of course, are more inclined to grant the happiness indefinitely—as romantic comedies always do—by ending with the wedding and making no mention of the marriage. Likewise, contemporary pop culture loves gay weddings but holds its peace when it comes to marriage. Mass media not only permit, but celebrate, queer nuptials in which two people declare their status as a couple. But they stop far short of insisting that this event confer status on the couple in the eyes of the state.

The trope of triumphing lovers is so powerful it trumps politics, bulldozing past the inconvenient facts of the law with the sheer force of its familiar imagery and narrative drive. Even the current, campy Off Broadway show *My Big Gay Italian Wedding* never mentions that queer couplings are not recognized by the state. It's parents and church that stand in the way of Anthony and Andrew's union in this slapdash sitcom (plus Andrew's reputation as "the biggest slut in Bensonhurst"). The fellows get their happy ending—rings, blessings, drunken guests and all—and the marriage's lack of legal standing simply doesn't come up. Similarly untroubled images of gay weddings abound. According to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, major newspapers in all but two states in the United States now include gay and lesbian unions among their wedding announcements. The Commercial Closet, an organization that chronicles homo sightings in advertising, lists thirty-nine recent print and broadcast ads that feature gay wedding scenes. The matter of discrimination stays out of the picture, the great unmentionable that might spoil the happy day.

It seems paradoxical, then, that most Americans respond to the equal-rights claims of gay and lesbian couples by favoring civil unions for them but not marriages. It's the schmaltzy old trope, however, that softens them up and makes queers legible within a familiar romantic realm. Thus, when the issue of inequity is brought forward—as gay wedding protests did all year by making equality under the law the centerpiece of the revels—Americans' sense of fairness can't help but kick in. Love is love, after all. The sentiment goes only so far, though, before bumping into homophobia in the dominion of "sacred" marriage.

Moreover, plugging unreservedly into the wedding plot can close down queer options even as it opens straight hearts. In romantic comedies, cast-out and suspect lovers always have to prove that they merit comic closure—whether by answering riddles, retrieving some symbolic object, making it through an ordeal or by simply growing up—and the protest-spectacles for gay marriage have been no exception. In order to be embraced as ordinary couples, the heroes of these nuptials must tacitly renounce such practices as promiscuity or preferences for communal rather than nuclear household arrangements. Even if domestic normality is exactly what innumerable gay and lesbian couples want, the mass public display of this desire as *the* primary queer demand excludes those in the movement who don't

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share that dream. Worse, it accepts the meanspirited neoliberal principle that citizens must show that they are worthy of their rights. Like public assistance that is provided only to the so-called "deserving poor," the recognition that gay marriage bestows goes only to "deserving" queers.

Some thirty-three years ago, the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) took over New York's City Clerk's Office and declared "Gay Day" at the marriage bureau. When heterosexuals applied for licenses, the demonstrators gleefully turned them away.

How thrilling the cheekiness of that zap seems now—as does its openness to the possibility of abolishing marriage altogether. But the GAA—having split off from the Black Panther–supporting, Vietnam War–opposing Gay Liberation Front—helped pave the way down the aisle by narrowing the movement to a single-issue gay rights agenda.

Through spectacle and mass action, this year's protest weddings—and then, the first days of the real ones in Massachusetts—have reasserted the heady possibilities of a queer public sphere even as they have pressed for access to a privatized set of rights. Once married—secure in their protections and recognized as full citizens—will gay and lesbian couples step out into that public space and participate in the contentious work of democracy? Might their contentment renew their sense of solidarity and visions of liberation? Everyone is a sucker for a love story that ends with a wedding. What happens after that joyful finale is ours to invent. ◆

Onward Christian Soldiers

The religious right's sense of siege is fueling a resurgence.

Esther Kaplan

Phil Burress, president of the Ohio-based Citizens for Community Values, recalls that back in 1996, as he was busy coordinating the passage of state Defense of Marriage Acts, gay marriage still seemed "so far out there, so impossible, that the grassroots just didn't take it seriously."

As he tells it, all that changed for good last summer, when the Supreme Court's *Lawrence v. Texas* decision legalizing sodomy, and Canada's decision legalizing gay marriage, sent shock waves through the religious right. Justice Antonin Scalia's ferocious dissent was circulated widely, and his assertion that "state laws against bigamy, same-sex marriage, adult incest, prostitution, masturbation, adultery, fornication, bestiality, and obscenity" were now all "called into question" stoked the movement's sense of siege. Suddenly, the antigay backlash kicked into high gear. Focus on the Family head James Dobson wrote to his supporters that the fight against gay marriage would be "our D-Day, or Gettysburg or Stalingrad."

As the battle over same-sex marriage played out in Massachusetts during the subsequent months, the Republican Party reacted cautiously—afraid to alienate its social conservative base but afraid, too, of a 1992-style backlash against a full-fledged culture war. The "family values" movement had no such qualms. As the possibility of gay marriage neared, and as American opposition to it swelled in the polls by year's end to nearly two-thirds, the issue caffeinated the movement's grassroots. "Now they're getting involved by the tens of thousands every day," says Burress. "I'm beginning to think this was a good thing for America, because it woke people up." To the thrill of movement leaders, their constituents at last began adopting an apocalyptic tone, too. Responding to the events in Massachusetts, Carol Schumacher of Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, wrote a letter to the Focus on the Family newsletter, saying, "Soon all of the U.S. will become Sodom and Gomorrah."

The conservative Christian magazine *World* characterized the new outcry as not another "noisy ultimatum" from a family values movement known for noisy ultimatums but rather a display of "quiet resolve." Evidence of that resolve surfaced everywhere. The Traditional Values Coalition, a Beltway lobby group, began sending out 1.5 million mailings a month asking voters to push for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Focus on the Family, with its vast Christian media empire based in Colorado Springs, launched a media campaign and its president, Dobson, took a leave from his paid post (he remains as chairman) to free himself from not-for-profit constraints and fight gay marriage "on the political level." Randall Terry, the militant anti-choicer, sent out a national letter to Christian activists to rally them against "homosexual perversion." The man who once urged his Operation Rescue troops to throw themselves in the path of women seeking abortions was now saying the *Lawrence* decision "put our Republic in great danger.... America's survival hangs in the balance."

Family values leaders who didn't rally to the cause were purged: Ken Connor, who'd served as head of the Washington, DC–based Family Research Council since Gary Bauer stepped down to run for President in 2000, disagreed about redirecting the organization's resources to lobby for a federal marriage amendment. "There have been 1,700 proposed constitutional amendments," he told *Christianity Today*. "We have only added 26 to the Constitution. That tells you something." That was the wrong attitude. By mid-July Connor had been forced out, replaced by former Louisiana state representative Tony Perkins, whose claim to fame as a legislator was that he'd authored a "covenant marriage" law, the country's first, which created a binding biblical marriage in which couples relinquish the right to no-fault divorce.

Esther Kaplan is the author of With God on Their Side: How Christian Fundamentalists Trampled Science, Policy and Democracy in George W. Bush's White House *(New Press), which will be published in October.*

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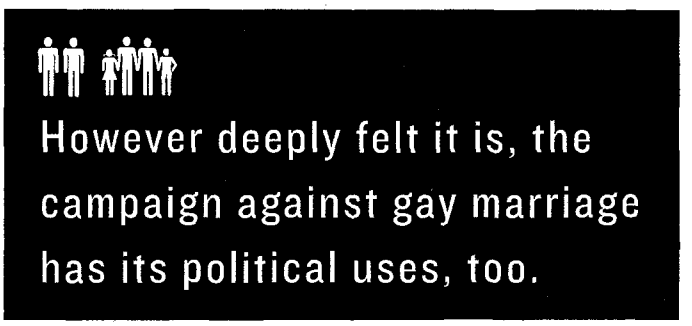
Of course, Connor was right: A federal constitutional amendment is an uphill battle at best. Most Americans may oppose gay marriage, but support for an amendment hovers at a politically risky 50 percent. After several months of furious organizing, Dobson recently complained, only thirty senators have endorsed the amendment, and other senators "don't want to talk with us, they don't want to meet with us, because they're scared of this issue." That's why, a week after Massachusetts began issuing same-sex marriage licenses, Focus on the Family, along with the Family Research Council and the National Association of Evangelicals, organized a live church service, dubbed "The Battle for Marriage," simulcast to 500 Christian congregations, to prepare their troops for a major fight.

At the event, hosted by the New Life Church in Colorado Springs, speaker after speaker tapped into the deepest wellsprings of the movement's opposition to gay marriage: the veneration of heterosexual marriage and family as a God-sanctioned ideal, whose primal image is Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; the condemnation of homosexuality as unnatural and sinful, traced back to Leviticus; and the belief that America is, or should be, in some fundamental sense, a Christian nation, whose laws and social structures spring from, or at least don't openly contradict, Christian scripture. Some speakers tried to offer up Capitol Hill–ready talking points—about the effects of same-sex marriage on childrearing, public school curriculums and divorce and cohabitation rates—and hawked literature, such as Focus on the Family's *Marriage Under Fire*, with its eleven focus-group-tested arguments against same-sex marriage. But those efforts fell flat. It was what Dobson called "spiritual concerns," the deep conviction that marriage is on the side of God and homosexuality on the side of sin, that animated the crowd.



When Dobson proclaimed that marriage between a man and a woman "came straight from the creator himself," he received an ovation. And when Bishop Wellington Boone, of the Fellowship of International Churches, the only African-American on the program, proclaimed, "If God says in Leviticus for mankind to lie with mankind and womankind with womankind...is an abomination, I'm going to tell you, I'm in agreement with God!... We're standing with God on this one!" the crowd was on its feet. When I asked Stephen Crampton, chief counsel for the Center for Law and Policy at the Tupelo, Mississippi–based American Family Association, what was a more central concern, the weakening of "traditional marriage" or the normalization of gay sexuality, he said, "It may be unfair to even separate the two."

In their more candid moments, Christian right leaders acknowledge that gay activism isn't the only force undermining traditional ideas about marriage—indeed, they feel that they share the blame. Studies have shown that born-again Christians experience a higher divorce rate than both mainline Protestants and secular couples, and divorce rates are higher throughout the Southern Bible Belt than in the liberal Northeast. Like many gay-marriage opponents I spoke with, Peter Sprigg, senior policy director for the Family Research Council, expressed concern about the fallout from no-fault divorce and said, "We've created a culture where people enter a marriage without being ready to commit to a lifetime, and a lack of trust that marriage will succeed." Randall Balmer, a professor of religious history at Barnard College, Columbia University, and an evangelical Christian himself, believes that the Christian right's enthusiastic support for divorcé Ronald Reagan signaled a turning point, when conservative evangelicals stopped viewing divorce as a sin. "In the view of many evangelicals," he says, "we've been in full retreat for decades on the family, and we've got to draw the line." Their form of atonement is to fight gay marriage.

However deeply felt the battle against gay marriage is, it has its political usefulness, too. Mel White, co-founder of the Christian gay advocacy group Soul Force, sees the explosion of concern as more a political calculation than a moral one. White, a former theology professor, became close to several of the movement's figureheads in the 1970s when he was tapped by a publisher to ghostwrite biographies of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Billy Graham. He became their confidant—until he came out as gay. White says that while "they are sincere believers in their own propaganda" about marriage, most of these leaders are far more comfortable with gay people than they let on. After he founded Soul Force, White was invited to Falwell's Lynchburg, Virginia, headquarters to make his case against homophobia to Falwell and his staff; afterward, Falwell pulled White aside and said his publisher wanted to do a sequel to the book White had penned. "He asked if I didn't tell anybody, would I write it for him," White recalls. Falwell also mentioned that one of his senior staff members was a gay man who lived with his partner; Falwell said he had told the aide that "if they didn't put Jerry in a corner, he wouldn't put them in a corner." In White's view, the Christian right interest in gay marriage isn't, in the end, so different from President Bush's: It arouses the base.

"They are the expert on demographic studies," White says. "They know more about finding issues and creating mass mailings than anyone—at knowing what evokes a negative response and thus donations and recruits." He says movement leaders are always looking for "cobelligerency" issues, where people of faith and others can join together in common cause. In the 1970s it was anti-Communism, but when Communism fell, their research pointed to abortion and homosexuality.

As they began the campaign against gay marriage, he says, they found out that it was extremely effective. While most Americans don't support abstinence-only education and further restrictions on abortion access, opposition to gay marriage is a far less marginal idea. Whether or not the movement wins a federal marriage amendment, the battle itself holds out seductive possibilities for growth. "When you spend $1 million to send a mailing out, and you have to bring in $2 million or $3 million a week, as Robertson and Dobson have to do, then you have to have something that really works," says White. "And this works. Homosexuality is so unknown to so many people, and so terrifying to them, that this

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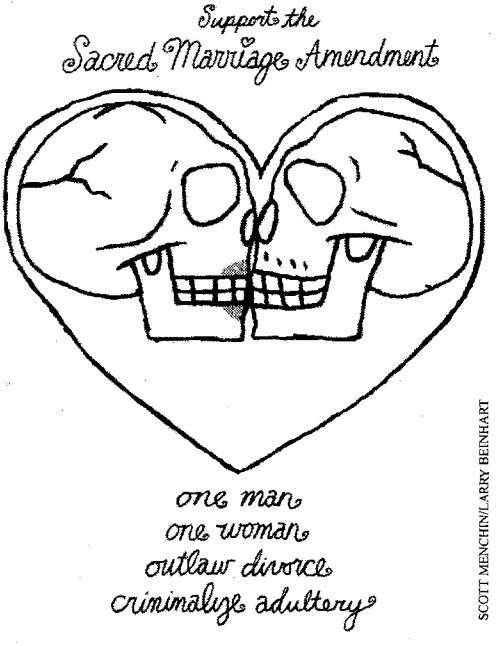
really struck a chord." In February the right's direct-mail guru, Richard Viguerie, told the *New York Times* that he was planning to send out 10 million appeals in the coming months for several social conservative organizations.

"They built their base on an alarmist message, so having their guy in the White House has not been great for fundraising," says Jean Hardisty, the founder of Political Research Associates, who has researched the far right for more than two decades. Indeed, movement patriarch Paul Weyrich has pointed out that the Christian right had not gained members during Bush's tenure until gay marriage began "turning things around." "The gay marriage issue has been a real gift for them," Hardisty says, "because it's revitalized their base, and revitalized their fundraising."

For both Bush and his Christian right followers, gay marriage offers the appealing possibility of attracting conservative Catholics and religious African-Americans to their cause. A May 2003 memo by Republican pollster Richard Wirthlin calls a gay marriage amendment "an ideal wedge issue," and this is as true for building membership as it is for attracting votes. Support for gay marriage is, not surprisingly, lowest among white evangelicals (12 percent), but it is lower among African-Americans (28 percent) than among any other racial group taken as a whole. When black ministers such as Boston's Eugene Rivers complained that gay activists had "exploited" the legacy of the civil rights movement to make their claim for marriage rights, leaders on the Christian right—despite records of opposing African-American civil rights—took their cue. The Family Research Council announced that the group "strongly opposes the hijacking of the civil rights movement by homosexual activists"; Concerned Women for America released a report titled "Homosexuals Hijack Civil Rights Bus: Claiming a 'Civil Right' to 'Marry' the Same Sex Demeans a Genuine Struggle for Liberty and Equality"; and the more recently formed Alliance for Marriage wooed the endorsements of such African-American institutions as the AME Church and the Church of God in Christ. A spokesperson for the Massachusetts Family Institute warmly recalled a prayer service against gay marriage on Boston Common led by white and Latino evangelicals, with a sound system paid for by the Catholic Church. "If you'd ever told me I'd witness something like this, I'd have said you were crazy," he says. "But this issue has created common cause."



SCOTT MENCHIN/LARRY BEINHART

Richard Land, a lobbyist with the Southern Baptist Convention, has argued that "politicians who don't know the radioactive nature of this issue now will by November of 2004." This is a widely held belief on the right. A February 2004 Pew Research Center survey hints at the political calculus: Among the one-third of Americans who support gay marriage, it's not a deciding issue; only 6 percent would refuse to vote for a candidate who opposed gay marriage. But among the two-thirds of Americans who oppose gay marriage, Pew found the issue had surpassed abortion and gun control as a "make-or-break voting issue": 34 percent would refuse to support a political candidate who did not share their view, a number that jumps to 55 percent among evangelical Christians. Peter LaBarbera, then on the staff of Concerned Women for America, issued a white paper in November 2002 arguing that races for governor, Congress and Senate in Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland and Minnesota had been decided in part on the question of gay marriage and gay civil rights—and that in each case, "pro-family" candidates were victorious. (Democratic analysts cite the governor's race in Oregon and the recall election in California as counterexamples, where pro-gay candidates came out on top.) This fall, anti-gay forces hope to pull off a repeat of their successes in 2002.

The anti-gay-marriage movement in Massachusetts has produced more than a dozen candidates who will challenge state Democratic lawmakers on their support for gay marriage, many with strong backing from Governor Mitt Romney. Behind the antigay candidates, says John Marble of the National Stonewall Democrats, is a formidable fundraising machine that is offering the most serious challenge to Massachusetts Democrats in more than a decade. State Democratic leaders say they're planning to spend five times more than they've ever spent on local races to repel the effort. Ron Crews, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, just took a leave from his post to make a quixotic run for Congress against pro-gay Democrat Jim McGovern, and Crews's acting successor, Kris Mineau, is convinced that gay marriage is a "bellwether issue." Mineau points to a special election in March, where Republican Scott Brown, running on his opposition to gay marriage, beat the aide of Democratic, openly gay incumbent Cheryl Jacques for a state legislative seat, in a race described by the *Boston Globe* as a test of the electoral power of the issue. Mike Gabbard, who led the fight against gay marriage in Hawaii, has thrown his hat into a Congressional race there, and Tom Coburn, a former Congressman who has served on the board of the Family Research Council, is running for US Senate in Oklahoma on an anti–gay marriage plank with James Dobson's help. Mineau says he plans to run voter registration drives and put out voter guides, while Burress reports that churches across the country are chomping at the bit to get more directly involved in politics, angling for legislation that would allow ministers to endorse candidates from the pulpit.

Burress is involved right now in a signature drive to put a constitutional amendment on the Ohio ballot codifying marriage as between one man and one woman. According to Marble, six such initiatives are already on state ballots (in Georgia, Mississippi, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma and Utah), and seven more—some in such swing states as Oregon and Ohio—are in the offing. Since these initiatives aren't bound by campaign-finance rules,

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deep-pocketed right-wing funders could pour millions into voter mobilization drives in these states, as long as they target the ballot initiatives. And this could provide some long coattails for Christian right candidates, including Coburn and George W. Bush.

Marble, a former Christian right activist himself, sees the 2004 elections as "a last gasp" for the movement against gay marriage. With the clock ticking, says Marble, the Christian right will throw everything they have into 2004, "and they are going to get something out of it." It remains to be seen whether that means actual electoral and legislative success in key states, or the more limited victory of a religious right that is re-infused with energy yet isolated from the American mainstream. A Gallup poll, conducted in early May, found that opposition to gay marriage had already slipped to 55 percent, from 65 percent in December. And polls have consistently shown an age gap, with gay marriage far more widely accepted by the young. "Up to this point, we've had anti-gay politicians talk about the threat of gay marriage, the worst-case nightmare scenario," Marble says. "By the next election, they'll have to deal with the reality, and people will see that the reality of gay marriage is not so scary at all." ◆

Wedding Vows

How to have our family and smash it too.

Donna Minkowitz

I want to be married. I want to make a vow. I want to go where someone else goes, to dwell where they dwell, to have my bones buried, finally, where their bones are buried. When Ruth said these words to Naomi 3,000 years ago, they meant essentially the same thing they do today, when Ruth's utterly unconventional, daring vows are used in many Jewish and Christian wedding ceremonies. Her vows were socially outrageous then not because they were made by one woman to another but because the promise was extended by a person of a relatively privileged ethnicity and nation, who proposed taking on dire poverty and stateless status to be with the other. But in fact, there's a sense in which all marriages, gay and straight, partake of this radical proposition. Marriage is about making a beloved alien one of mine, flesh of my flesh. Marriage means taking someone unrelated by blood into our family, for good.

The paradox, both for Ruth in 1000 BC and for me, a lesbian who would dearly love to get married, is that family itself is a profoundly atavistic concept. In fact, socialists and feminists through the centuries have had simply terrific reasons for wanting to get rid of it. (1) It's brutal. All over the world, families are violent and abusive—at least an extraordinary percentage of them are—and family status is used from Manhattan to Montevideo as permission for violence. (2) Throughout history, family has been the linchpin of a pervasive social view that encourages favoring one's own bloodline, tribe, race and nation above all others. There's clearly something muddle-headed about apportioning rights, wealth and the promise of care for children, sick people and elders based on shared genetic heritage alone. (3) Family, even today, tethers women to childcare, and in some places to sexual slavery.

Family sucks, in loads of ways. No question. But fortunately or unfortunately, we have never found anything to take its place. Nothing has ever been tried as an alternative that has caused less misery than the family. Many of the alternatives—for raising children at least—seem to have caused substantially more. (Consider the history of most orphanages, institutions for physically or mentally disabled children and group homes for New Jersey foster care or Cultural Revolution–transplanted children in China.) We seem to be stuck with the family, at least for a long while. And granted this, I want to invite somebody I love into mine.

But I don't want to be used as part of someone's picture of respectability, responsibility or "maturity" just because I want to marry. I'm still angry at forces on the left that use "family" as a synonym for legitimate, proper, worthy, even working class (like New York's influential Working Families Party). In fact, the enshrinement of family and marriage oppresses singles, childless people and the happily promiscuous (or poly-amorous) with a moralistic and ridiculously unitary vision of the way people ought to live.

Thankfully, gay marriage is part of a world-historical change in the social meaning of marriage and family, one that will likely make it easier and easier for people to stay single. Beginning with wage income for women and picking up steam with accessible contraception and abortion, more equitable divorce laws and daycare, the family has gotten freer. More recently, stepfamilies, adoption, unmarried committed partners, even families made up of platonic, unrelated friends (wasn't there a recent TV series about this?) have been socially normalized. Family is at once more open to definition by individuals and, except economically, better supported by the government (through child abuse laws and laws against marital rape, divorce and child custody reform, domestic partnership and now gay marriage). Even more important, family has become elective, at least for people at most income levels.

So why do I want to marry? For love. I believe that, in this world where all we have is our own mind, groping toward something good, two minds together—committed to each other's happiness and passionate about wanting to continue their relation—add up to something holy.

So take away my card as a good materialist. I don't care.

I once believed, with certain left historians, that romantic love

Donna Minkowitz, a writer in Brooklyn, is the author of Ferocious Romance: What My Encounters With the Right Taught Me About Sex, God and Fury *(Free Press).*

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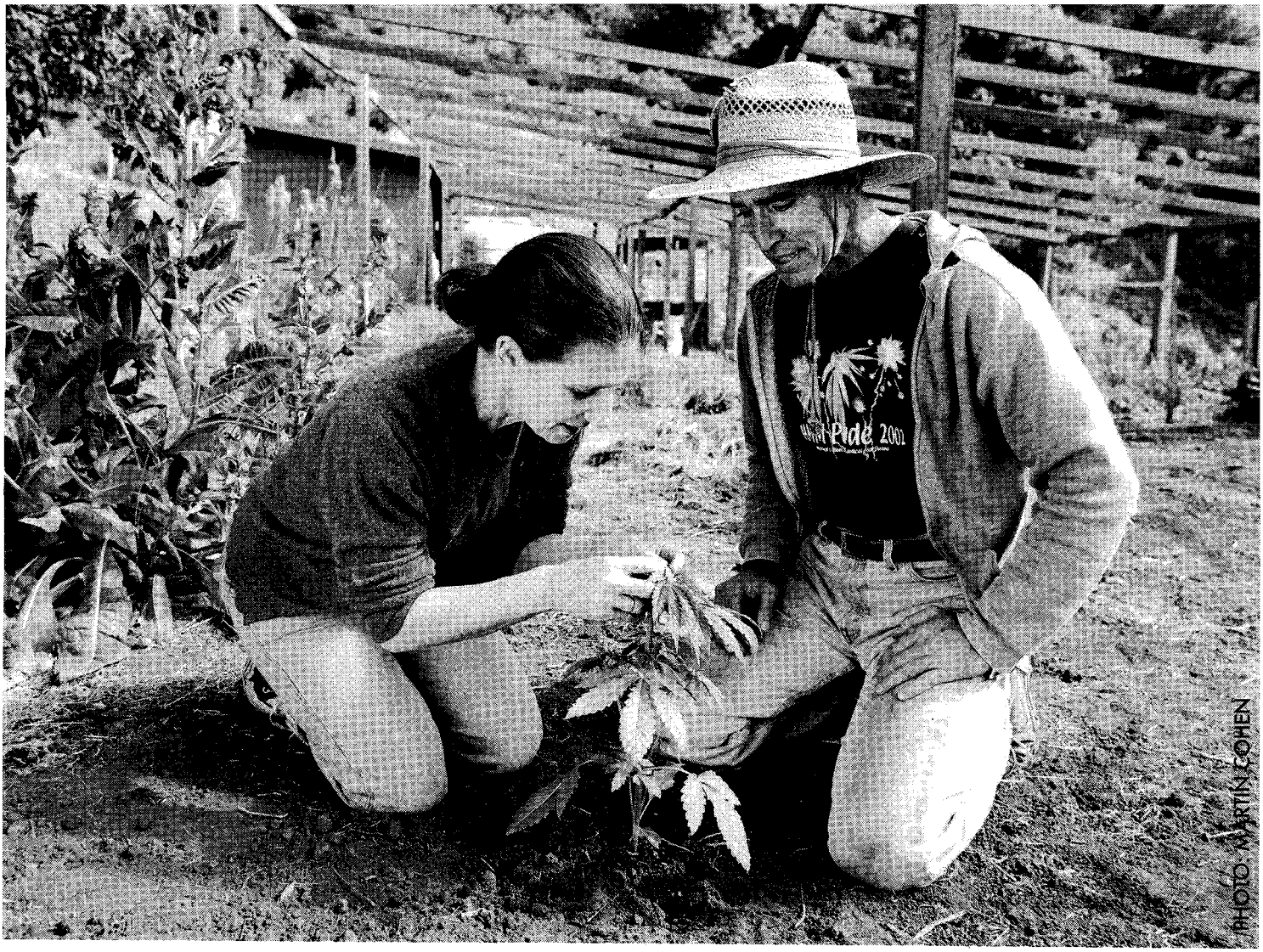

PATIENTS TO FEDS: "Hands off our medical marijuana." The Court agrees -- it's up to the states.

On September 23, 2002, Mike and Valerie Corral's medical marijuana hospice near Santa Cruz, California, was raided just before dawn by federal agents. They were held at gunpoint while their co-op garden was destroyed.

The raid sparked outrage from Santa Cruz officials because the co-op was a text book example of what California's medical marijuana laws were supposed to allow: a safe place for the sick and dying, with a common garden, where the patients could care for each other. The city, county, and the co-op sued the federal government.

On April 21, U.S. Circuit Court Judge Jeremy Fogel barred the Justice Department from interfering with the Corrals, their 250 fellow patients, or their marijuana garden.[1] Judge Fogel cited Raich v. Ashcroft, the recent Ninth Circuit decision that found the federal government has no jurisdiction over patients who grow their own plants.[2]

The latest government study says, "cannabinoid drugs might offer broad spectrum relief not found in any other single medication."[3] A TIME-CNN poll shows that 80 percent of Americans support medical marijuana for the seriously ill.[4] Isn't it time for the federal government to catch up with science and the people?[5]

CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org, DrugWarFacts.org, MedicalMJ.org

Mike Gray, Chair; Robert Field, Co-Chair 717-299-0600

1.Santa Cruz v. Ashcroft, C-03-1802JF 2.Raich v. Ashcroft 9th Cir No 03-15481 3."Marijuana and Medicine" Inst. of Medicine, 1999 4. TIME Nov 4 2002
5.To help, contact Americans for Safe Access www.SafeAccessNow.org 888-929-4367 or WAMM at www.wamm.org 831-425-0580

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was invented by troubadours in thirteenth-century France. Either that or by capitalism. I no longer believe this. Capitalism has almost certainly enabled more people to marry for love than ever before, but romantic love has been with us since Sappho wrote "I have not had one word from her./Frankly I wish I were dead," since Jonathan loved David with a love David thought "surpassed the love of women."

Sure, capitalism, with its movies and advertising, and its need to create at least imagined havens from its depredations, has made us all want love, not to mention wild, constant sex. But romantic love, like sexual desire, may be an essential human trait.

As Bronski Beat sang, I feel love. So why would that make me want to marry? Today more than ever, marriage is an imaginative, hopeful, self-directed act of family-creation, ex nihilo. For both gays and straights, it is a bold assertion of vision against the odds, to try to stay together, to attempt to deal with all the difficulties that people in relationships confront, because of a subjective bond that two people feel.

Why make it legal? I want to have an unquestioned right, in all fifty states, to visit my partner in the hospital, to make medical decisions if she is incapacitated, to have equal rights to raise our children, if we have any and then split up. I want not to have to testify against her in a court of law, and to rest secure in the knowledge that I can inherit from her or she from me (heterosexual family members frequently, and successfully, challenge the wills of gay relatives in court, forcing surviving partners to leave homes they've lived in for thirty years).

If I take the risk and marry, I need and want recognition by society that this person is part of my family, in fact the closest part. That we have become, by our own election, and with nobody else's input, a tribe.

This is the way to have our family, and smash it too. ◆

Marry, Marry, Quite Contrary

To wed is to lose one's precious distance from conformity.

Catharine R. Stimpson

Gay marriage: I regard it with a mixture of fear and rage, but my initial response as it loomed up as a national issue was astonishment. I would no more have expected to see couples lining up to marry in San Francisco or New Paltz than a fish in earlier centuries would have expected to find a submarine running through its salty home.

Surprise overtook me because I had trusted my measurements of American society. Born in 1936, raised in a small provincial city in the Pacific Northwest, I had swum in "mainstream America." I thought I knew its religious, social and legal values; which were fluid, which fixed. Heterosexuality was stable. I had also lived cheek by jowl with religious fundamentalists, gone to high school with them, shared a locker corridor with popular and intelligent girls who would tell me that when they got married, and they surely would, they would, as the Bible mandated, be subservient to their husbands.

Even the nicest and most tolerant of the people in my hometown would have responded to gay marriage as an utterly alien event, stranger by far than Martians or Plutonians landing in the high school gym. For marriage simply *was* the yoking of a man and a woman—a crucial part of the apparatus through which everyone traveled from birth to death. To be sure, some female schoolteachers lived together as couples, but, like nuns, they seemed sexless. If they shared a bedroom in their modest homes, the beds were twins, often with matching crocheted bedspreads. Because they were polite and kind and taught children deftly, they had won social acceptance. Otherwise, not to be married or sadly widowed or unfortunately divorced was to dwell in a nameless limbo.

Gay sex, however, did have names and belonged, if not in hell, in criminal domains. Some of the nicest and most tolerant of people felt gay sex was literally nauseating and considered it filthy and forbidden, a peril from which their children had to be protected. It is strange and sad and dislocating to be with people who would vomit and protect their children if they knew what your sexual desires were, but I grew used to it—as a fish might to dangerous pollutants in the waters.

Despite my years of living in tolerant New York, I have refused to forget the lessons of my childhood, reinforced in the women's college that trusted my mind and distrusted my body. I have retained traces of internalized homophobia, as if mercury had entered my system. This is one source of my fear of gay marriage. I believe that making it such an open issue is like throwing homophobic predators living, bleeding flesh that will nourish them.

But my fear of gay marriage has a second, more affirmative source as well. I have grown to treasure the difference that being a lesbian has made, the existential choice it has signified, the psychic and moral distance from conformity it has established. It has given me an edge. It has also accustomed me to a life of hurly-burly, improvisation and conflict. Behind marriage, especially one confirmed by a religious ceremony, is a dream of unending unity—of the will of God, the state, two people. When children are born, they will join this cosmic, political, legal and psychological unity.

In my spiritual life, I can read the Bible, and I do; I can pray, and I do. Because I was baptized and confirmed in a church with many liberal traditions, most of its doors are open to me. In my political life, I can be patriotic, and I am. I can believe in the rule of law, and I do. I can live with my partner, Liz Wood, for nearly thirty years and help to raise her four children. We were a lesbian

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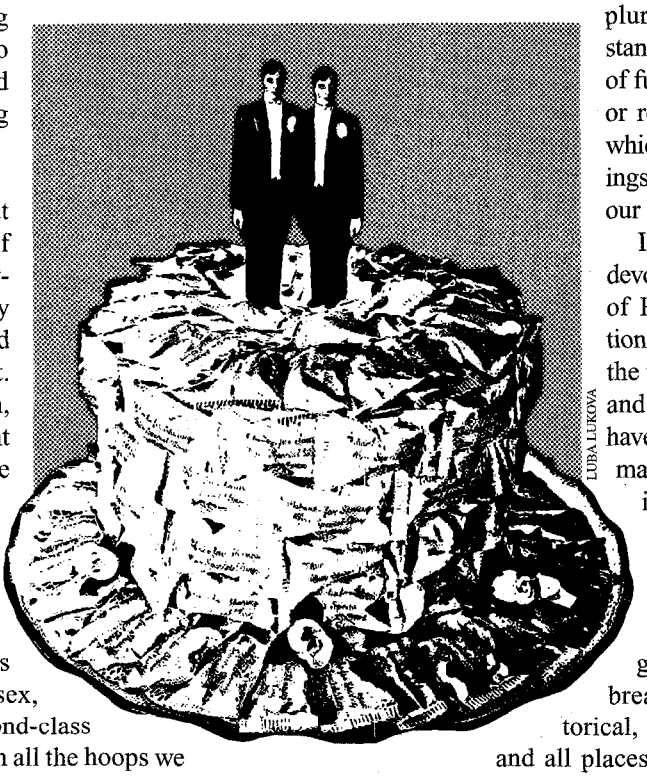
couple with children long before it was fashionable and vacation spots were gay-friendly.

But to marry? To follow that well-trod path, whether I wore a white veil or polka-dot bikini at the ceremony? To do so would be to imitate most of the others with whom I grew up and went to college. Once, at a college reunion, I peeked into the open bedside-table drawer of the married classmate who was hosting our dinner. It contained two items: a Bible and a package of golf scorecards from her country club. Being a lesbian was proof that I had not succumbed to the Church and the call of the eighteenth hole.

To imagine performing the marriage vows puts me into a swivet, for this speech act entails a being-togetherness until I die or am abandoned. The tomboy in me, the Jo March before she met Professor Bhaer, the outlier, the maverick, the flirtatious devotee of the imp of satire—all this rises up and cries out, "Don't fence me in." Yet even though I doubt I would ever exercise the freedom to marry, far more offensive than being called names is being told I cannot do something that other people can and most people think is a boon. I am being fenced in—with barbed wire.


LUBA LUKOVA

One obvious compensation that marriage offers for the loss of freedom is that basket of morally approved legal goods. My brothers and sisters and cousins and friends dip into this basket. I cannot. Marriage is better than a civil union, beneficial though a civil union might be. As the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court wrote on February 4, 2004, in language at once prim and pioneering, there is a "dissimilitude between the terms 'civil marriage' and 'civil union'.... It is a considered choice of language that reflects a demonstrable assigning of same-sex, largely homosexual, couples to second-class status." Liz and I have jumped through all the hoops we could find to protect each other in case of a medical or legal emergency, but a marriage certificate would have trumped all our declarations of domestic partnership.

Reading about the lesbian couple in New Jersey with two children and a dog, who are among the plaintiffs in the lawsuit seeking same-sex marriage, I was moved by one woman's words, "We just want to go to town hall and pay $28 for a marriage license." They were sweet, and also showed the shrewdness of the normalization strategy of the gay and lesbian movement. Not only is it effective to say, "I'm here, I'm queer, but I'm not really that different." The words also pay tribute to "the normal" as a comfortable, honorable, potentially imaginative zone in which to live.

Indeed, some of my pride—in my freedom, my mild bohemianism, my devotion to the avant-garde and the edgy—has been a defense mechanism against having to calculate the price of my lack of legitimacy because of not being "normal." Toting up the cost of illegitimacy and ascribed abnormality would fling me into a vortex of anger and a truly tacky self-pity. Yet, one night, the temptation was too great as Liz and I were driving on the road that circles the North Shore of Staten Island, where we were then living. I had just learned that I was not going to be short-listed for a college presidency, in part because of questions about who would live in the president's house on campus. In response, I fantasized that I was Charles R. Stimpson, and that my résumé said I was married and the stepfather of four children. And there, in the passenger seat of a Honda, I wept a little because I would never be such a figure of respectability and loving valor.

Finally, my anger is now as swift a current as it is because I believe that the politics and society of my time are being threatened. I have been a part of an America and a world that have become happily more pluralistic and more expansive of civil rights—psychologically, culturally, socially and politically. The struggle for gay marriage is yet another test of this pluralism and expansiveness. Constantly at war with them are a variety of fundamentalisms, be they political or religious or a toxic combination, which engage in self-serving readings of sacred texts to clamp down on our flesh and spirits.

If I am a fundamentalist, it is in my devotion to the Constitution and Bill of Rights, although our interpretations of it must flow judiciously with the times and its history has vicious and stupid peccabilities. Those who have proposed the flagrantly anti–gay marriage constitutional amendment, in part out of political cynicism and in part out of real hatred and fear, would assassinate the Constitution—and justify themselves by proclaiming the sanctity of a gilded portrait of marriage that is breathtakingly calculated and ahistorical, as if all marriages in all times and all places resembled that of an idealized upright Dad and an idealized loving Mom, who bear and rear virtuous children who do well on standardized tests.

As I contemplate the struggle ahead—the grinding, state-by-state fight to allow same-sex marriage, to transfer a marriage license from one state to another, even to provide benefits for domestic partners; the equally fierce church-by-church fight for same-sex marriage or even to permit openly LGBT ministers—I feel ripples of the exhaustion that come from swimming in heavy waters, crosscurrents and riptides. The world is full of monsters to fight: armies that mow down and mutilate the innocent, governments that let children cry out in hunger, men who brutalize women, the AIDS pandemic, the homophobia that helps to sustain this pandemic. No doubt, the fight for gay marriage ultimately defuses homophobia, but I am unable to see that anyone's being able to marry a woman is of the same order of magnitude as all of us being able to feed and clothe and educate our children. I wish this struggle were not upon us, but it is, and has been since 1993, when the Hawaii Supreme Court stated that

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denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples might be unconstitutional, a ruling overridden by popular vote five years later.

So I hold, like an oxygen source, the image of the ebullient happiness of two old friends when they returned, married, from British Columbia, or the image of the good-humored ease of two younger lesbians who answered, "Why not?" when I asked them what they thought of gay marriage. They then gazed at each other with intimate complicity and confessed that yes, they were thinking about it, and buying some land and building a little house.

The submarines are here. Some are sinister, carrying the destructive weapons of constitutional amendments and state laws and hateful rhetoric. Others, however, are yellow submarines, their sonar detecting and determining and divining love. I am now one of their pilot fish. ◆

Marriage on the Mind

The Bush Administration's misguided poverty cure.

Sharon Lerner

Taken the wrong way, a correlation can be a dangerous thing. Consider the relationship between marriage and well-being. There's much undisputed evidence that married people are, on average, wealthier, healthier and better educated than their single counterparts. Even the novice student of statistics will tell you that association does not mean causation—that being poor, unwell and uneducated is as likely to discourage marriage as the other way around. Nevertheless, the notion that tying the knot can alleviate poverty and bring about positive social change has become the central justification for the Bush Administration's push for low-income women to get and stay married.

If the Administration is really concerned about poverty and other social problems it claims are caused by divorce and singleness, why not tackle those ills directly? Instead, what the Administration calls the "Healthy Marriage Initiative" is an array of programs that promote the institution in its narrowest sense. While debate has centered on the proposal attached to the stalled welfare bill, which would allot $1.6 billion toward marriage-related projects over the next five years, the federal government has already committed more than $90 million to marriage-related projects since 2001, according to the Center for Law and Social Policy. (The funds have been drawn from such diverse—and inappropriate—sources as the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Administration for Native Americans and the Developmental Disabilities Program.)

The Bush marriage strategy can be broken into two parts: efforts to encourage single people to marry and those aimed at keeping married couples together. The theory underlying the first category, which includes pro-marriage media blitzes featuring billboards, posters, calendars and pamphlets as well as premarital classes for high school students, singles and unmarried couples, is that explaining the benefits of marriage will nudge people to the altar. The assumption seems to be that the targets of these campaigns somehow forgot about the institution—or that they don't know enough to desire it.

But it turns out most low-income people already want to get married. Perhaps the most illuminating insight into why they don't comes from the Fragile Families study, an ongoing, in-depth investigation of the relationships of more than 3,700 mostly low-income, unmarried couples in twenty US cities that began in 1998. According to these researchers, led by Princeton sociology professor Sara McLanahan, 86 percent of the unmarried mothers and 91 percent of the unmarried fathers who were living together around the time of their child's birth said they wanted to get married. Yet by the end of the year, only 15 percent of these couples had.

Administration officials seized on these findings, taking them to mean that marriage-education efforts need to reach poor couples during this "magic window" after birth. But inadvertently or not, they missed the key point: Most couples in the study didn't follow through with their plans to marry because they faced daunting and sometimes insuperable obstacles, such as infidelity and drug abuse.

Poverty also seems to make people feel less entitled to marry. As one father in the survey put it, marriage means "not living from check to check." Thus, since he was still scraping bottom, he wasn't ready for it. "There's an identity associated with marriage that they don't feel they can achieve," McLanahan says of her interviewees. (Ironically, romantic ideas about weddings—the limos, cakes and gowns of bridal magazines—seem to stand in the way of marriage in this context. Many in the study said they were holding off until they could afford a big wedding bash.)

Underlying the anxiety around marriage identity is real poverty that eats away at people's abilities to be supportive parents and life partners. And while the chicken-egg conundrum of money and marriage comes up here, the Fragile Families study offers evidence that income facilitates marriage; an increase of one dollar per hour in men's wages in the study increased the odds they'd marry by 5 percent. Men who earned $25,000 or more in the past year had more than double the rates of marriage of those who didn't.

Given the stresses of poverty, one might predict that direct income support would improve relationships. In fact, one of the few government efforts to have a documented effect on marital relationships is the Minnesota Family Investment Program, which increased employment and cash supports for long-term welfare

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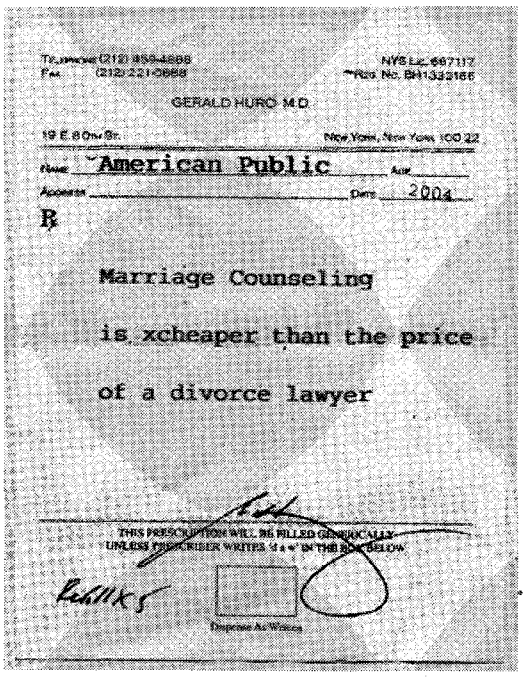
recipients. According to MDRC, a nonprofit research organization that evaluated the Minnesota program, unmarried cohabiting couples who participated in it were almost 38 percent more likely to marry, and participants who were already married were less likely to divorce. Another income support program, the Wisconsin W-2 study, had a similarly positive effect on relationships. Yet the Bush Administration has said its marriage money cannot be used toward any efforts—whether income support like these, drug treatment or employment assistance programs—that do not directly address the issue of marriage.

Policy-makers crafting the marriage plan have also evaded the inconvenient reality of domestic violence, which at any given time affects between 15 and 25 percent of the welfare caseload. Relationship violence should, of course, be a deterrent to marriage. Distressingly, though, mothers in the Fragile Families study who were victims of violence weren't any less likely to marry their partners. Advocates are concerned that, in their zeal for marriage, marriage educators may overlook domestic violence. Or, by offering financial incentives to marry, as several do, programs will encourage women to get or stay in violent relationships.



BENITA RAPHAN

Some of the state-based marriage programs, including the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, have welcomed the advice of domestic violence experts on the curriculum for marriage classes and allowed them to train people leading the state's workshops. But, while Administration officials have repeatedly said they don't want to push women into violent relationships, they have given money to many programs that do not have such provisions to protect against domestic violence, and the pending marriage initiative attached to the welfare bill does not require programs to include them.

It's true that, if the government were somehow able to increase marriage rates just by encouraging and educating people without dealing directly with these hurdles, the poverty rate would register a slight decrease. When researchers conducted a statistical simulation of marriage, matching single mothers and unmarried men who are similar in age, education and race, they found that, if marriages were increased to 1970 rates, just by combining incomes the poverty rate would drop from 13.0 percent to 9.5 percent. Of course, pooling resources can make life easier financially (though many of the people being encouraged to marry already do). Yet no one knows how to get couples to marry; there is no evidence that marriage-promotion efforts actually work. Moreover, such programs ignore the overlapping cultural forces—including the increasing economic independence of women and gay liberation—that caused marriage rates to drop in the first place.

There is some evidence that efforts to help married people stay together can be effective. Studies have shown that certain workshops, counseling sessions and classes now being considered or funded by the government can improve communication between married couples and cut down on marital discord. But so far, this research reflects the experience only of the mostly middle-class participants who have sought out these programs and not that of the poor people the current marriage effort is now targeting.

The difference is critical. Various projects are under way to adapt programs to this new population, translating books and manuals into Spanish and producing written materials for people with lower reading levels, according to the Administration. But as even Wade Horn, the Department of Health and Human Services' Assistant Secretary for Children and Families and architect of the marriage initiative, admits, "It's much more complicated than just taking the drawing of the Lexus in the driveway and putting it in front of an apartment complex." Indeed. By focusing just on marriage, rather than on the problems of poverty and violence, Horn and his cohorts are unlikely to succeed in preserving many marriages in low-income populations.

Programs encouraging low-income couples to get married are similarly limited by the overwhelming problems of the populations they target. According to McLanahan of the Fragile Families study, one-third of unmarried new parents would need social services such as drug or mental-health treatment before marrying, while circumstances, such as incarceration or a couple not being romantically involved, put marriage out of the question for another third.

Nevertheless, the Administration is eagerly pushing ahead, willing to recruit any bit of research to its cause, no matter how flimsy or biased. Or so it would seem, judging from a May press conference that touted an evaluation of a community marriage initiative run by Marriage Savers, a Christian group that employs clergy to prevent divorce.

The report, which was co-written by Stan Weed, concluded that the group's efforts resulted in a decline in divorce rates in certain counties. (Before conducting the study, Weed received $46,737 from Marriage Savers, according to his 2002 tax return, though the group says it was just passing on money for the evaluation from a Justice Department grant. The conservative Heritage Foundation, which strongly supports the marriage-promotion initiative, helped procure the funding for the study.) But even Weed, a conservative Mormon researcher known to be supportive of abstinence and marriage programs, concluded that the drop in divorce rates was "modest" and could be the result of forces other than the Marriage Savers program. Still, Horn seemed to regard the study as a strong defense of the entire marriage plan. "Critics of the Healthy Marriage Initiative have charged that we don't know how to help more couples to build lifelong marriages or to reduce the likelihood that half of new marriages will end in divorce," he said at the press conference. "This pioneering research by Dr. Stan Weed and colleagues proves them wrong."

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And despite the Administration's rhetorical emphasis on "healthy marriage," the study took the view that the reduction of divorce is a positive outcome, regardless of the quality of the marriage. Religion is clearly at least part of the reason that Horn, who was himself a board member of Marriage Savers before taking a government position, and others seem so eager to promote the institution at any cost. Marriage Savers is openly church-based, and Michael McManus, president of the organization, sees marriage in biblical terms. "Couples often live together as a way to test the relationship. However, both Scripture and sociology suggest they are embracing evil," McManus writes on the group's website. Through his program, "churches help couples test their relationship while holding onto good and avoiding the evil."

Marriage Savers is just one of several religious groups promoting marriage, and the Bush Administration would clearly like the number to be higher. A March 29 statement from the Administration plugs its latest priorities on the welfare bill, including the expansion of "charitable choice" provisions, which would allow more faith-based organizations to get marriage grants through the bill. Revealingly, the policy statement also opposes any increase in funding for childcare.

Taken together with the Administration's support of a constitutional amendment against gay marriage (without even a half-hearted attempt to explain why the institution wouldn't bestow the same supposed benefits on same-sex couples), the limit on childcare funding and the emphasis on religion help answer at least one of the looming questions about the marriage initiative: The Administration isn't focusing its policies on poverty and social problems because they're not the point. Marriage is—in its most traditional, most religious sense, in which women stay at home with children and are financially dependent on their husbands. Rooted in politics rather than research, the Bush marriage initiative is symbolic policy that aims to appear "compassionate," even as it skirts the real problems of poverty and turns back the clock on women's and gay liberation. ◆

On the web: *Kevin McCarthy and Kate Levin enroll in a Bush-approved marriage prep course. See www.thenation.com.*

The Rules of Attraction

Why Ms. Independent still wants to get hitched.

Hillary Frey

"I am never getting married." I drove my mother crazy with this proclamation in my early 20s. Although my parents have never nagged me to get hitched, or been anything but supportive of my serial and often short-lived relationships (at least while they were happening), my mom would shake her head and sigh, "Oh, you don't want to say that." She seemed to think that I was lamenting rather than declaring, that I had determined myself to be unsuitable for the institution, that I assumed no man would ever have me.

But it wasn't that. At the time, I equated singlehood with adventure. I remember watching a documentary about the "Mama of Dada," artist Beatrice Wood, who liked to say she loved seven men she didn't marry and married two men she never loved. (Wood lived to be 105; asked about the secret to her longevity, she purred, "I owe it all to chocolate and young men.") She threw dinner parties for young artists and served pasta on plates that she'd glazed herself. She lived in California, with an incredible view. I wanted to do that—to have my family made up of friends. To be adored by many, rather than just one. To be responsible, ultimately, for only me.

Somewhere in my mid-20s, however, as New York City morphed from the backdrop to my artistic and romantic exploits to, simply, the place where I live, my dream of absolute freedom started to feel like the dream of some other young woman. Without meaning to, I ceased being the quirky girl who wore glitter eye makeup; I got my financial situation under control; I navigated a serious relationship; I was hired to work at this (my favorite) magazine. Stability, regularity, security reigned. I started to think about marriage, not like I did a few years earlier—as an antiquated institution that would inhibit my beloved libertinism—but as a desirable, even sexy declaration of my togetherness.

Of course, my relationship didn't work out, my finances got all twisted up again, my "togetherness" unraveled. But even as these things happened, marriage persisted, in the words of numerous marriage-oriented self-help books, as an abstract "goal" in my mind, something I hoped to "achieve." But why? It's not because I'm a romantic. Although 94 percent of single men and women between the ages of 20 and 29 believe that you should marry your "soul mate," whatever that is, I'm not one of them. I'm obviously not a social conservative, who thinks the health of our great nation rests on the shoulders of two-parent families. I don't even know that I'd want to have a wedding, or that I think I can be eternally monogamous, let alone expect someone else to be.

The single thing I can point to that has incited my crisis, if that's the right word to use, is not in itself a concrete thing at all: pressure. Not directly from family or friends but from the entire world I move in—a predominantly white, straight, middle-class and educated world that perpetuates its own marriage myths and produces an insular literature to support them. This is a world that encourages young women to plan like crazy, to take full advantage of the benefits of our privileged class standing and get ourselves into the workplace and up that corporate ladder as soon as we finish our liberal arts degrees. This is a world that then turns on the young, successful women it has spawned and tells us, at nearly

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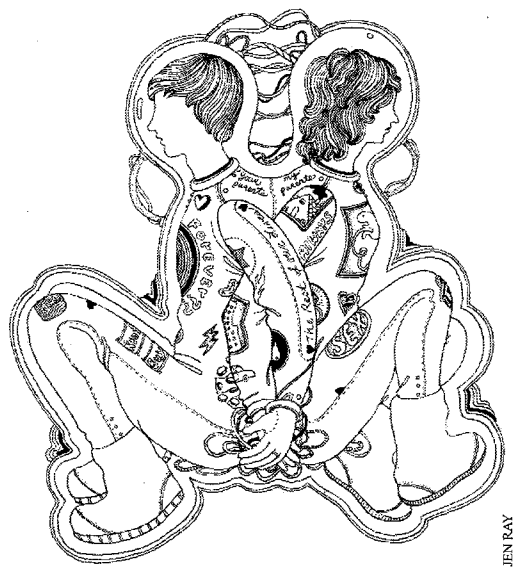
every turn, that our "clocks are ticking," that "good men" are practically impossible to find and that we'd better focus some of those planning skills on our love lives or we are going to miss out on the secret to true happiness: the husband, the kids, the house, not to mention "the most important day of our lives"—the wedding day.

Although the marriage rate has been in slow but steady decline since 1970, and although there has been a dramatic rise in the percentage of single women in their 20s and 30s, a 2003 study from the National Marriage Project (NMP) at Rutgers suggests that most of my fellow Generation Xers—the female members of which are the most educated and career-oriented ever—are actually itching to get hitched. Having grown up in a culture of divorce, we think: "I can do better than my parents did." Another survey indicates that most young people see marriage as an essential part of "the good life" that everyone wants (this is also known, in survey-speak and self-help literature, as "having it all"). These romantic ideals fly in the face of reality. The NMP study also points out that about 40 percent of married Americans are not in very happy unions, and the chance for marriage failure hovers around 50 percent. Indeed, although a majority of Americans join its ranks for at least part of their lives, marriage is, in many ways, a risky institution to support.



JEN RAY

But popular culture aimed at women like me—from *Friends* to *13 Going on 30* to *The Bachelorette*—has long glamorized marriage as the pinnacle event marking the beginning of mature womanhood. Even shows that seemingly celebrate singledom, like *Sex and the City*, do so in anticipation of marriage, chronicling the long, painful search for "the one." Supporting these plot lines is a slew of literature that claims to help young professional women make sense of their choices, but really succeeds only in making us all more paranoid. Books like Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's *Why There Are No Good Men Left* and Sylvia Ann Hewlett's *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*, to name two prominent titles, tell me, not so subtly, that I have irreparably messed up my life by not having married yet, or at least by not having found the man I intend to be with by now (I'm 28). Stories about women balancing work and family appearing in women's magazines, *Newsweek* and the *New York Times Magazine* all contain a similar subplot: There's a timetable to follow, missy. If you don't get with it soon, you're doomed.

Here's what they suggest: Say I want to have a kid or two sometime in my mid-30s (though I should probably try earlier since my fertility is already in decline). Well then, ideally, I'd be married by 31, so that I could enjoy some time with my partner before the total insanity of childrearing (which I'll likely be doing most of) takes over my relationship and threatens to ruin my marriage and career (if I still have one). To be married by 31, I really should have met my partner by now; I have to know him, fall in love and live with him to see if he's tolerable before getting engaged.

If I haven't yet, I'm pretty much screwed, according to this literature, since my stock will plummet by my mid-30s, and the men my age who are still single will want to date young chippies who don't ask for much more than a free martini and a meal. With my attractiveness in decline, I will have no one to date, and suddenly, of course, I'll realize that "there are no good men left"—which also means, of course, no chance of kids, unless I end up being one of the rare women with enough resources and guts to go it alone.

I want to ignore these narratives, but they've been so well beaten into my head that I can't. This causes me discomfort, shame and considerable self-loathing. I'm a feminist—a working, independent woman. Why have I bought into this idea of meticulously planning out my love life like it's work? Why, when I have been so happy on my own, do I worry my life will be miserable if I don't get married soon?

Maybe I shouldn't be so hard on myself. In one way or another, all facets of our culture reinforce the idea that marriage is part of maturity, an affirmation of femininity, a mark of success, a saving grace. And if one is inundated with this line of thinking basically since birth, it's a hard notion to shake, no matter how rational and self-conscious you are.

A big part of the message, too, is that marriage, and its half-sister, childrearing, are noble, necessary goals that bring a unique, unparalleled satisfaction to women's lives, a sense of worth and accomplishment that is different from, easier to come by and more dynamic than that achieved in the workplace. Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels wrote wittily on this recently in their book *The Mommy Myth*, in which they explode media messages sent via celebrity moms that motherhood is a romantic, blissful calling filled with love, bunnies and gurgling infants. They don't deny that motherhood is a great thing to experience and participate in. But it's clear: Marriage and the domestic sphere should not be used as a fast-track to improving one's self-esteem.

Yet, given what their workplace is like, it makes sense that young women begin to consider homemaking and childrearing as desirable alternatives to their earlier career choices. Beyond starter and entry-level jobs, where women and men are on more equal footing, glass ceilings and wage inequalities still routinely appear. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, women employed full-time, year-round, earn only about 76 percent of what their male counterparts do. And—a factor as important as persistent economic disparities—women face greater obstacles than men in terms of being recognized for work well done in school or the office. As Anna Fels shows in her new book, *Necessary Dreams: Ambition in Women's Changing Lives*, after being passed over for promotion, denied credit for a well-executed project or being talked over by boys' and men's voices since preschool, young women are increasingly finding themselves running out of steam in their late 20s.

Fels expertly details both how young girls are denied recognition regularly awarded to boys as well as how this failure of

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recognition dampens drive and ambition in young women over time, forcing us to consider marriage as a way out of professional disappointment. As someone in the midst of a "fraught period," as Fels describes it, I felt relieved to find that this state is practically requisite for a woman around my age. I rely on my personal life to validate me in a way that work doesn't always manage to. Doing nice things and being generous to my boyfriend—who is grateful and generous right back—provides me with immediate confirmation that I'm doing something right and well. Each kiss is a reassurance; each dinner invitation an affirmation of *me*. With this kind of mindset, could anything possibly make me feel as good as finding a partner who wants me for life?

However, it's important to point out that, for my boyfriend, a kiss is just a kiss, a dinner invitation a chance to spend some time together. He'll probably get married, he says, with an air of detachment; it's not really something he thinks about. Of course! Men aren't encouraged to fantasize about their "soul mate" or their wedding day, independent of an actual "soul mate" or wedding day. Just as no male character on *Friends* declared, like Monica did, that she'd been dreaming about her wedding since she was a child, there are no $24.95 hardcovers out there telling men that they'd better hurry up and grab what they can because their careers are going to be more and more in competition with their personal relationships the older they get. The reason isn't that men don't want to get married; some don't, but most still do. And once married, there are plenty of books for men explaining how to keep their marriages healthy and happy (and sexed up, of course). But since the nexus of work and family isn't as complicated and contradictory for young men as it is for young women, the boys don't worry. Although great headway has been made toward bringing equality back home, everyone knows that the burden of housekeeping and childrearing still rests mainly on the shoulders of women. Plus, men have biology on their side.

Indeed, there's a long way to go for women like me. We need more books like Anna Fels's—a robust literature that confronts the reality of women's changing roles instead of trying to stabilize and reinforce the old ones. We need to educate women about their bodies but steer clear of worrisome terms like "biological clock." We need more testimonials—like the excellent essay collection *The Bitch in the House: 26 Women Tell the Truth About Sex, Solitude, Work, Motherhood, and Marriage*—that discuss the real challenges faced by women who work and/or mother.

To be sure, it's not the media's "fault" if I get married—or have a civil union, if that option ever becomes available to straight people. But the more I've thought about why having a lifelong partnership is something I want to do (this, despite the fact that it may very well fail), the more I see that culture has gotten under my skin. I've always accepted, as Diana Ross sang in 1966, that you can't hurry love. But it's hard to remember sometimes that you really can't put it on a timetable, either. ◆

Pimp My Bride

Reality TV gives marriage an extreme makeover.

Judith Halberstam

Marriage. Is it: (1) an intimate union recognized by the state, (2) the joining of man and woman in the eyes of God or (3) a competitive sport on network TV produced for the entertainment of millions? Anyone emerging recently from an isolation chamber (say, in Guantánamo Bay) might be forgiven for believing that marriage has gone to the dogs (and the gays and the lesbians, for that matter) and become a game show. Indeed, young men and women are lining up to be chosen by complete strangers for lifetime commitments even as divorce rates hover at 50 percent. Why has marriage become prime-time fodder for a public that craves escapist "reality" TV? Should we interpret these new marriage shows as evidence that the institution has completely crumbled or as a reinforcement of its ubiquity?

Reality marriage shows have angered conservatives who feel that the programs represent marriage as a kind of popularity contest. But one could easily argue that these shows take marriage for granted as a basic fact of life and revel in its endlessly fascinating details. Some gay and lesbian viewers have complained that these shows recentralize heterosexuality at a critical moment in the nation's marriage debates. And yet, the conservatives are ultimately right: *The Bachelor*, *Joe Millionaire*, *Average Joe*, *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance* and all the other "win a husband/wife" shows surely trivialize the sanctity of marriage and, in the process, turn straight coupling, for better or for worse, into pure entertainment. Heterosexuality never looked so fragile.

The breakthrough marriage show was ABC's *The Bachelor*, which debuted in 2002. In the interests of gender equality, the successful first season was soon followed by its matched set: *The Bachelorette*. These shows set up the bachelor/ette with twenty-five dates and allow him or her to eliminate a certain number each week until the number of potential mates has been winnowed down to four. At this stage, the lucky bachelor/ette meets the suitors' families and then makes a cut. When the suitors have been reduced to the more wieldy number of three, the bachelor/ette goes on intimate overnighters with each date (creating an adulterous scenario in the process). After another cut, the two remaining contestants meet the bachelor/ette's family, and then he or she makes a final decision and proposes on the season's finale.

The reality marriage shows actually replace family sitcoms

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about the drudgery and necessary hardship of marriage (*Roseanne*) and challenge other sitcoms about the fun of single life (*Friends*, *Seinfeld*, *Sex and the City*). By giving marriage a radical makeover, they revive the audience's interest in private lives and turn the viewer's attention away from the public sphere during a period of intense political secrecy, grotesque military blunders and faint public dissent. The marriage shows, like much reality TV, produce a steady stream of "real" images of "conflict" (*Big Brother*), "survival" (*Survivor*) and "terror" (*Fear Factor*), which then compete with real conflict, real survival and real terror.

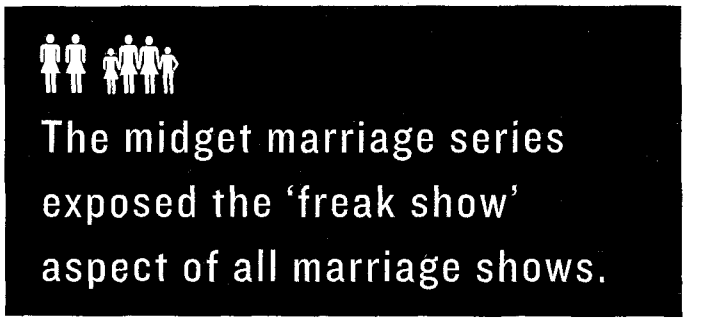
But don't mistake me for a reality-TV basher. Ever the cultural optimist, I truly believe that audiences can read between the lines of pure ideology (romance) to see clearly the actual rendering of marriage in these shows as practical (tax credits, access to sex, state recognition, gifts at the wedding, gifts at the baby shower, social and familial approval), while at the same time understand real marriage as neither romantic nor practical (little access to sex after a while, expensive to have children, you hate each others' family and friends).

In the end, *The Bachelor/ette* openly depicts heterosexual mating patterns in a Darwinian, "survival of the cutest" way, in which men and women choose mates based on looks and immediate sexual chemistry alone. This turns heterosexuality into a highly superficial system of selection that runs counter to the ideology of romance manufactured by Hollywood and women's magazines—namely the "soul mate" model, which, in fact, most of the participants on these shows bring with them. All of the marriage seekers claim to be open to love and marriage; all tend to be young, good-looking and financially secure; many, weirdly, seem to be in "pharmaceutical sales" (you tell me). Most claim to have been either unlucky in love or just not managing to find that one special person. Meredith Phillips, for example, last season's "bachelorette," says she signed up for the show "in an attempt to find her soul mate." Meredith, a makeup artist and a model, was a participant on Bob Guiney's season of *The Bachelor*. When Bob picked another hopeful lovely from his batch of ladies, Meredith was crushed, since she had been sure that Bob was her "soul mate." But ABC allowed her another stab at tracking down the elusive "one and only," and the next season she claimed to have found him among the twenty-five financially secure prospective husbands picked out for her perusal. Soul-mate hunting, it turns out, depends less upon the twists and turns of fate and much more upon a well-funded boyfriend search on national TV.

A whole series of shows that followed *The Bachelor*, therefore, made it their mission to show that hetero men and women care about more than just money and looks. *Average Joe*, as the snappy title implies, asks a woman to choose from a set of "average guys," and *Joe Millionaire* has women compete for a guy whom they are tricked into thinking is very rich (in fact, he's a construction worker). While the goal of these parasite shows is to demonstrate that the participants really value relationships over fame, TV exposure, money and quick sexual encounters, in each case, greed and looks win out over other more abstract markers of compatibility. On *Average Joe*, for example, the producers send in a group of male models to confuse the bachelorette halfway through her process and, sure enough, each season, she jumps at one of the models and dumps the average Joes!

Reality shows, we now know, have a limited shelf life, in the sense that once the format has been learned by the audience, boredom can set in all too quickly. This season's *The Bachelor*, for instance, was so bad and so boring that you could not tell the difference between three out of the four final blond women, and the fourth was cast as a psycho around whom the producers engineered a very halfhearted stalking episode.

The tedium factor drove all the networks to new creative lows this season, and they desperately fiddled with the format to try to find fresh arrangements of groomed male and female bodies in search of matrimony. So, audiences could pick between *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance*, *The Littlest Groom* and even a gay show on Bravo, *Boy Meets Boy*. On the first, a woman has to trick her parents into accepting her "big fat obnoxious" fiancé, who is played by a professional actor, in order to win a million dollars. In the second, a midget man picks between a group of female small people and some regular-sized women. And in the gay version, a clean-cut, handsome and smart white gay guy goes on dates with countless other clean-cut, handsome and smart white guys (only some of whom are actually gay) in search of a life partner. His challenge is to select the gay men from the gay impersonators. My



Big Fat Blah, Blah, Blah failed because the trickery was staged and blatant; the midget marriage series bombed because it exposed the "freak show" aspect of all the marriage shows. And the "trick the fag" show ultimately fell way short of its aspirations because the gay contestants, in the end, seemed far more interested in cruising each other than in focusing their attention on the one good-looking gay guy selected by producers as the Prime Gay!

Two scenarios have so far been completely avoided by the "get hitched in prime time" phenomenon. First, all the shows have refused to test the waters of interracial dating, and so far none have cast a bachelor/ette of color in the main role. In a perfunctory nod to diversity, there are always contestants of color in the group of potential mates at the beginning of these shows. The black or Asian contestants usually don't make it past the third round (you don't want to cut them too quickly); the occasional ambiguous Latina/o can make it a bit further. But in the end, these shows always manage to avoid parading interracial romance on prime time. A suspicious viewer might be inclined to read intimations of social engineering into these shows. Are they ads for white families at a time when demographic shifts have made white people a minority in certain cities and states? Are the shows trying to caution against interracial unions or just portray a process of "natural selection" as "color-blind"?

Second, while the format seems to extend to telegenic gay dudes, so far there is no interest in creating a show about lesbian

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dating/mating. Far be it from me to advocate for such a thing, given that, based upon *The L Word*, such a show would undoubtedly involve hetero-looking bisexual babes pressing up against each other for the viewing pleasures of straight men. And yet, the absence of lesbians and people of color (not to mention lesbians of color) bears mentioning. Apparently, US audiences can thrill to the spectacle of arranged marriages and dating opportunities for all kinds of white and heterosexual bodies, but the whiff of interracial or lesbian trysts would make audiences queasy and stretch the marriage paradigm to its limit.

On the finale of *Average Joe Hawaii*, one bachelor finally took a stand and rejected his new mate in a fit of pique. Was he reacting to the false moralism of the show? Was he refusing to fall in love in three days on national TV? Did he want to make a point about selling intimacy short? Nope, he was furious that his new girlfriend had held back from him a frightening secret: She had once dated Fabio! Even though no one could explain why this "secret" should bother our "Above Average Joe," he claimed that "any guy in America" would feel as outraged as he did. What Fabio represented to this insecure model-actor we may never know, but these are the mysteries of reality TV that we must tolerate. In the end, our stud could not recover from this terrible disclosure, and the match made in NBC studios faltered and died a natural death.

Few of the hopefuls on reality marriage shows actually marry their new mates. Most use their time in the limelight to secure modeling contracts, get exposure as actors and enjoy the half-light of the semi-celebrity status that chases them for a few weeks after the show ends. Of course, if they were honest, the studs and babes would admit that the chance to nuzzle, cuddle and smooch twenty-five hotties with impunity in a two-month span is reason enough to sign on for the rocky ride of reality dating. But honesty is not the best policy for bachelor/ettes. So as each potential soul mate confesses to "falling for" (the most overused phrase in reality marriage land) the man or woman of the hour, the bachelor/ette returns the love and longing in equal measure and commits to love, honor and obey, forsaking all others, in sickness and in health, until death do they part, or at least until the next episode. ◆

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
several articles and editorials supporting instant-runoff voting and other forms of proportional representation. Unfortunately, this November we have to deal with the voting system in place. In the end, the voters will of course make up their own minds, and despite Camejo's overheated imagination, no *Nation* editors will be standing at voting booths preventing them from choosing whom they wish. Also, *The Nation* has not in its editorials blamed Nader for 2000.

As for our California-recall cover: Camejo's thunderous invocation of Stalinist airbrushing strikes us as overwrought, but we are sorry he feels slighted by not being included on it. Our satiric movie-poster graphic, which—along with candidates Larry Flynt, Gary Coleman and "the Terminator"—featured the headline "California Chaos: A Political Epic With a Cast of Thousands," may have been in questionable taste, but it was scarcely a thought crime. —THE EDITORS

YOU CAN HELP AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS

New York City

■ Chris Hedges's May 24 "Evidence of Things Not Seen" has so much power as an essay that readers may lose sight of the important book he is reviewing, Philip Jones Griffiths's *Agent Orange: "Collateral Damage" in Viet Nam*. For information on the impact of defoliant weapons in Vietnam and on a campaign to educate the public on US responsibility, visit www.ffrd.org/indochina/agentorange.html.

Readers wishing to assist Vietnamese children and other victims of Agent Orange may make tax-deductible contributions through our nonprofit organization, addressing war legacy issues since 1985. They will be passed along promptly. Larger donations can be channeled to specific Vietnamese groups. JOHN MCAULIFF
Fund for Reconciliation and Development

Durham, NC

■ Chris Hedges's review is a stark reminder of the continuing legacy of chemical warfare in Vietnam. At the end of January, the Vietnam Agent Orange Victims' Association and three of the estimated 3 million Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange filed a lawsuit in the US federal court in Brooklyn against a number of US chemical manufacturers. This is the first legal action brought by Vietnamese against the makers and suppliers of the lethal herbicide used by the US military during the war. The association has expressed concern for US veterans and their families as well as Vietnamese victims, and the presiding judge says the case will raise questions of genocide and war crimes if Agent Orange can be classified as a chemical weapon that violates international law. The complaint and more information about the lawsuit are posted at www.oneworld.net/article/archive/6297.

A Justice for Victims of Agent Orange Petition can be accessed at www.petitiononline.com/AOVN. As of May 30, nearly 23,000 people worldwide had signed the petition; the campaign will continue until December 31.

Readers interested in helping to organize a traveling exhibit on human health and ecological consequences of warfare in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos called the Agent Orange Educational Project can contact Diane Fox at dnfox@u.washington.edu or Susan Hammond of Fund for Reconciliation and Development at shammond@ffrd.org. TRUDE BENNETT
DIANE FOX, SUSAN HAMMOND
CONSTANTINE KOKKORIS, BILL GOODMAN

PRESS WATCH

Washington, DC

■ In his reply to my letter to the editor ["Letters," June 7], Eyal Press writes, "Robert Dickson Crane, who worked with Daniel Pipes in the State Department, told me that Pipes was working on *In the Path of God* in the office they shared in Washington in the early 1980s."

To my knowledge, I have met Robert Dickson Crane once in my life, on February 3, 1999, when he attended a seminar outside Washington, DC, at which I spoke on "Islamism: a Critique." Never to my knowledge have I worked with him in any capacity, much less did we at any point share an office. (I have written to Crane to inquire about this point, thinking that perhaps there was some contact that I have forgotten; but he has not replied.) Crane seems to have a number of odd ideas about me and my work; I document another example on my weblog at www.danielpipes.org/blog/166.

For the record, I lived in Chicago until August 1982 and finished the manuscript of *In the Path of God* while living there. I moved to Washington and began work in the State Department in September 1982. Other than some finishing editorial touches, I did not work on the book while in Washington, and the first copy was in hand in March 1983.

DANIEL PIPES

CORRECTION

■ In "Kerry's War Strategy" (June 21), David Corn mistakenly reported that Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution favors a withdrawal of troops from Iraq by the end of the year. Daalder notes, "My position on troops is (a) we haven't had enough and still don't; (b) NATO should take over the mission; and (c) we should stay as long as there remains a need for them and they're wanted by legitimate Iraqi authorities." He would like the first set of elections in Iraq, now scheduled for the end of the year or early next year, to happen sooner if possible.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Scenes From a Marriage

JONATHAN SHAININ

Conventional wisdom suggests Israelis and Palestinians are bitter enemies: two sides mired in a century-long conflict marked by violence, hatred and an unbounded reservoir of brutality, each side armed with a solemn confidence in its own victimhood. A more nuanced approach suggests a certain weary familiarity between them: They are, as the Israeli writer Meron Benvenisti memorably put it, "intimate enemies," entwined in a shared history from which both dream of escape. To take it one step further, let us imagine that the tortured relationship of the two peoples is a kind of marriage: an unhappy one, to say the least, but a marriage nevertheless, a lasting bond whose hated entanglements remain too strong for either side to break.

As a generalization about the conflict, the marriage metaphor is, to be sure, a platitude. Just about every Israeli and American commentator—from Ehud Barak and Amos Oz to Thomas Friedman and Bill Clinton—has reached for it at some point, usually to plead the necessity of "a divorce," however painful. (The analogy is employed less frequently by Palestinians, who are more apt to invoke the image of an abusive husband or an arranged marriage.) But while the idea is unquestionably a crude one, its implications are seldom explored. Like any marriage, this one—watched more obsessively than perhaps any conflict in human history—remains largely inscrutable to those of us on the outside. While attempts to depict the lived experience of Israelis and Palestinians litter our bookshops and fill the newspapers, only a precious few register the intricacy of the connective threads, the interdependency fostered by decades of uncomfortable (and unwanted) coexistence.

From Juval Portugali, an Israeli geographer, we get this more elegant image, on loan from Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. It is the city of Valdrada, built at the edge of a lake in which the city is perfectly and entirely mirrored by another, such that "nothing exists or happens in the one Valdrada that the other Valdrada does not repeat, because the city was so constructed that its every point would be reflected in its mirror." The two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, are much more than castaways cursed to inhabit a cramped desert for all of eternity: They are, like two people joined by marriage, enfolded in each other, hopelessly conjoined, so that the actions of each send ripples through the water of the other. "The two Valdradas," Calvino concludes, "live for each other, their eyes interlocked; but there is no love between them." As Portugali remarks, the experience of being "mirrored" by Palestinians is among the "dominant experiences in being an Israeli."

A.B. Yehoshua, who was an Israeli before there was an Israel—he was born in Jerusalem in 1936—has, over the course of seven novels, said a lot about the experience of being an Israeli, and somewhat less about the vexed relations between his people and their Palestinian mirrors. But he has obsessively, from his first novel *The Lover* to his most recent, *The Liberated Bride*, considered the theme of marriage: the love that binds two people and creates them anew. There is a marriage at the heart of all but one of Yehoshua's novels, and it is never static, always collapsing or beginning anew: His lovers are forever coming together, struggling, betraying their vows or falling apart.

Begun in 1998, in the midst of the Oslo period, and finished just after the outbreak of the second intifada, *The Liberated Bride* is a nervous book, thick with anxiety over the unmasterable past and the uncertain future. After two novels—*Open Heart* and *A Journey to the End of the Millennium*—in which the politics of the present scarcely figure, *The Liberated Bride* announces from its first pages its grounding in the tension of the collapsing Pax Oslo. At a wedding in Mansura, an Arab village high in the Galilee, Yochanan Rivlin can hear "the distant boom of an artillery shell fired across the border in Lebanon," the aural premonition of coming

Jonathan Shainin is the co-editor, with Roane Carey, of The Other Israel *(New Press). He is on the staff of* The New York Review of Books.

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY

THE LIBERATED BRIDE.
By A.B. Yehoshua.
Harcourt.
568 pp. $27.

THE LOVER.
By A.B. Yehoshua.
Harcourt/Harvest.
352 pp. Paper $14.

A LATE DIVORCE.
By A.B. Yehoshua.
Harcourt/Harvest.
354 pp. Paper $14.

MR. MANI.
By A.B. Yehoshua.
Harcourt/Harvest.
368 pp. Paper $14.

THE CONTINUING SILENCE OF A POET: Collected Stories.
By A.B. Yehoshua.
Syracuse.
328 pp. $21.95.

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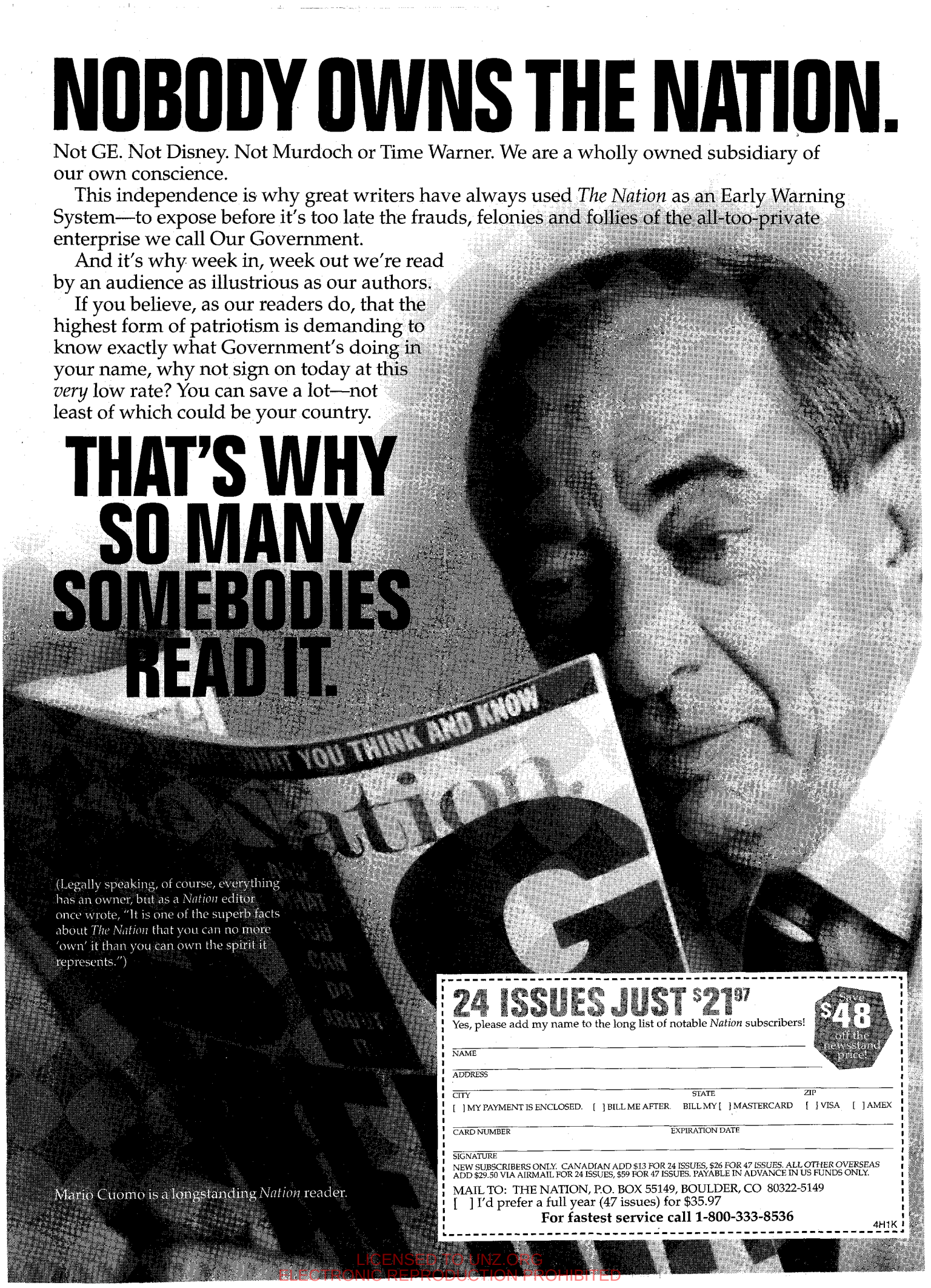

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disaster. The novel opens with Rivlin, a professor of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Haifa—where Yehoshua teaches literature—at the wedding of Samaher, his "annoyingly ambitious" MA student. The wedding is unbearable to Rivlin, who is haunted by the painful and unexplained collapse of his son Ofer's marriage to Galya, the daughter of a Jerusalem hotelier, five years earlier.

Rivlin, a historian, is enslaved by his obsession with the past, searching endlessly there for evidence to explain Ofer's present misery. He trolls for clues to the breakup of Ofer and Galya, herself newly remarried and pregnant, and returns time and again, often on the flimsiest of pretenses, to the family's hotel in Talpiyot—visits that he tries in vain to hide from his own wife, Hagit, a stern district court judge with no tolerance for her husband's interminable meddling. Interrogating Galya, her sister Tehila, and even Fu'ad, the Arab maitre d' and family confidant, Rivlin tries fruitlessly to unearth the mystery that is revealed to the reader by the middle of the novel: Not long after their wedding, eager to play his part in the management of the hotel, Ofer, in search of some blueprints to begin an expansion of the building, forces his way into a basement office where he discovers his naked father-in-law in repose, reading the newspaper, while his older daughter Tehila lies sleeping beside him. When Ofer tells Galya, she insists he recant his "fantasy" and breaks up their marriage, driving Ofer from Israel to Paris, where he takes restaurant classes and works as a night security guard at the Jewish Agency.

But while we know the cause of the catastrophe, Rivlin never learns, and he is haunted by the unexplained past right until the end, prevented from completing his own work: a long-delayed study of Algerian national identity in the 1940s and '50s that, he hopes, will reveal why Algeria plunged into a catastrophic civil war in the 1990s. "I've lost my concentration. And the [Algerian] Arabs have driven me to despair," he complains, with "the terrible carnage going on there now." "There had to have been signs, early warnings, by which a serious scholar looking unflinchingly at the present could unlock the past," he thinks to himself, mulling over the Algerian civil war with the same vocabulary he applies to his son's broken marriage.

In his search for the roots of the Algerian disaster—"Early Warnings of the Horror of the Disintegration of National Identity," he calls one paper—Rivlin is led by his mentor, the eminent Jerusalem Orientalist Carlo Tedeschi, to the papers of Yosef Suissa, a promising young academic who had been studying the popular literature of North Africa in the 1940s until his death in a suicide bombing. "He was a first-rate scholar who burned the midnight oil to understand the Arab mind," Carlo's wife, Hannah (herself a translator of pre-Islamic poetry), laments. "Not that that stopped them from snuffing him out one fine day." ("Those aren't the same Arabs," Rivlin, ever the decent liberal, protests lamely.)

Tedeschi, an elderly hypochondriac frequently hospitalized by his doting younger wife ("She loves him to be sick," Rivlin observes), pushes the skeptical Rivlin to examine the old stories for hidden signs of Arab society's latent illness: "We have to look for the hidden symptoms of impending disorder even before it breaks out.... We need a blood test to detect the antibodies that signal the malignancy...in one little gland, before it invades the entire body."

In his novels, A.B. Yehoshua has obsessively considered the theme of marriage, the love that binds people and creates them anew.

Suissa's papers are passed off to the newly married Samaher, who has postponed the completion of her degree for more than a year because of various imagined maladies: a "sick" grandmother, an imaginary pregnancy and then a long and unexplained depression. Under pressure from Samaher's mother, herself a onetime student of Rivlin's, to concoct some independent project that will confer a degree on her daughter, Rivlin gives her Suissa's collection of North African poems and fiction to translate. This project, too, drags on for months, during which time Rivlin is delivered occasional updates—which take the form of requests for further delay—by Samaher's cousin Rashid, who is stricken with hopeless love for his just-married cousin, and captive to his devotion to her.

Rivlin's willing entanglement with the young Arabs deepens as Samaher's delays mount. While his wife is out of the country on business, he puts up little resistance when Rashid tries to take him to Mansura, where the bedridden Samaher recites the promised translations aloud. Rashid, who makes a living shuttling Arab day laborers to their jobs in Jewish cities in his minibus, soon becomes Rivlin's personal driver. He ferries the Orientalist back and forth to the Galilee, into and out of the West Bank, and from Haifa to Jerusalem, hopeful that his dutiful service will obtain Samaher her final grade, and perhaps that the eminent professor—several of whose former students are now in the employ of the Shin Bet, Israel's feared internal security service—will be able to help Rashid's sister, who lost her Israeli passport when she married a West Bank Palestinian, return to the country.

The professor—like Yehoshua, the "scion of an ancient Jerusalem family" who moved to Haifa—is the evident center of the novel. And his incessant probing of the past, in search of answers to problems he cannot comprehend, which pushes him to cross boundaries both familial and national, is its engine. He is "still tortured by our separation," Ofer writes to Galya: "He's a historian who has to understand everything" because he is "consumed by doubt about himself." But this endless searching takes its toll, and before long his son and wife alike are furious. "You think you can call up ghosts and control them," Ofer scolds him, in a call from Paris. "When will you realize there are things that you don't have to understand.... You're always poking at things. Well, poke at your Arabs, not at me." Hagit castigates him in similar terms: "We're not putty in your hands to be twisted and molded for your pathetic investigations."

As we follow Rivlin to faculty meetings, weddings, the airport, the shopping mall, orchestra performances, Yehoshua renders a rich human portrait of the man in all his neuroses. But in the end, after Samaher gets her grade and Galya, before giving birth, finally forgives Ofer, Rivlin is no closer to understanding the cause of their divorce or the roots of Algeria's troubles. His son may be liberated from the past—"I'm morally a free man," Ofer declaims with relief—but Rivlin is not.

Consumed with the past and adrift in the present, Rivlin is the latest iteration of a recurring Yehoshua hero whose prototype may be found in the unnamed protagonist of an early story, "Facing the Forests," written in 1962. Alienated from his fellow students and his studies alike, he takes a job for the summer as a fire lookout, guarding the proud emblem of Israeli rebirth from unexpected conflagration. He hopes to find the solitude required to begin a long-delayed study of the Crusades, "certain that there is some dark issue buried within the subject," from which he can "bring some startling scientific theory back from the forests."

When he arrives, however, he is distracted from his historical labors by the forest itself, and by a mute old Arab—his tongue cut out in the war—who maintains the lookout station. He watches the forest intently,

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keen to discover the smallest spark, convinced on more than one occasion he has seen the start of a blaze that never materializes. He watches the hikers who visit the forest—comparing them to a "procession of Crusaders"—and, "impelled by his duty to warn them," polices their small campfires. His relations deepen with the elderly Arab, who tries to tell the lookout "that this is his house and that there used to be a village here as well and that they have simply hidden it all.... his wives have been murdered here." In the end, the Arab sets the forest afire while the lookout turns a blind eye, watching with barely concealed satisfaction; the next morning, "the ruined village appears before his eyes; born anew."

"Facing the Forests" and Yehoshua's other early stories, collected in English in *The Continuing Silence of a Poet*, established him, alongside Amos Oz and Aharon Appelfeld, as a leading voice of what Israelis call the "generation of the State," a group of writers who came of age after the 1948 war, amid the relative security of the newly established country. Mounting a literary challenge to the prevailing collectivist orthodoxy of the "generation of the War of Independence," they ushered in a new wave of Israeli modernism, putting the individual—often alienated from the Labor Zionist consensus—at the heart of their fiction, exploring an emerging tension between humanism and Israeli nationalism. By the early 1970s, however, that consensus had begun to splinter, and Yehoshua's long-awaited first novel, *The Lover*, published in 1977, twenty years after his first stories appeared, finds an echo of this unraveling in the form of a Haifa family fraying at its seams.

The Lover revolves around Adam, a stoic auto mechanic consumed by his search for his wife's new lover Gabriel, a Parisian exile who returns to Israel to claim his dying grandmother's inheritance and then disappears in the chaotic first days of the 1973 war. *The Lover*, a kind of Hebrew *As I Lay Dying*—complete with six alternating narrators and an elderly woman, Gabriel's grandmother, on her deathbed—unfolds in a dreamy haze before and after the war, as the nation makes its uneasy reckoning with the sudden disaster. "It came upon us as a complete surprise," Adam intones in the novel's first pages. "Again and again I read the confused accounts of what happened, trying to get to the bottom of the chaos that ruled them." As his family falls apart—his wife with her lover, his daughter expelled from her school—Adam sleepwalks through his days.

Adam, we come to understand, is unable to recover from the blow to his marriage delivered by the death of their first son in a traffic accident: "We couldn't bring the boy back," he thinks. "We really should have parted." He is drawn to the lover out of a kind of devotion to his wife—"someone who would fall in love with her for my sake too," to give her the desire that he has lost. But soon the lover is missing as well, and Adam, adrift in the shambles of his disintegrating marriage, takes to the highways of the troubled country in a trance-like search for Gabriel.

In *A Late Divorce*, the searcher is Yehuda, a grandfather with three grown children in Israel, who returns from America to obtain a long-overdue divorce so that he can have a child with a younger woman in the States. Over the course of nine days leading up to Passover, each of them narrated by a different member of the extended family—think *The Sound and the Fury* here—Yehuda struggles to get his wife, Naomi, who has been in an institution since an incident in which she tried to stab him, to consent to his terms of divorce. Like a man stumbling blindly into his own past, the strength of whose bonds he does not recognize, Yehuda's visit sows disorder throughout the family—in a recurring theme for Yehoshua, he is, like Gabriel in *The Lover*, a disruptive guest from the diaspora.

In Yehoshua's early novels, the disintegration of the family mirrors a growing despair about Israel's future in the wake of the 1967 war.

In Yehoshua's first two novels, the decay of family relations mirrors a growing despondency among the nation as a whole; what he calls the "gradual crumbling of the center of national values and cultural experience," in the wake of the occupation, the 1973 military debacle and the decline of the Labor establishment, finds its echo in his use of multiple monologues. The coarsening of Israeli society is exemplified by Yehuda's brash son-in-law Kedmi, whose monologue is a spleen-filled rant of Archie Bunkerish hate, full of invective for Sephardic Jews and Arabs—"darkies," he calls them—and anyone who gets in his way: "honk honk your head off you fucking Volvo you just wait till my son crosses the street you bitch." "This whole country," the married male lover of Yehuda's son Tsvi laments, "is too much for me."

While Yehuda seeks liberation from his past—embodied in the scar Naomi has left on his chest, which he eagerly displays to anyone who will look—his son Asa, another historian, looks there in desperation for answers to the present:

> To take some distant period and discuss it in trivial terms—to find a neglected document or manuscript that has yet to be written about and blow up its significance—to burrow through old newspapers in search of unknown facts about some second-rate statesman who lived in a forgotten age—let that be for the rest of them. But I would find the cryptograph, the secret code.... Not to prevent [mistakes] but to inoculate against them.... To isolate the meaning, the secret code of the past, and distill from it a serum that can be injected into human beings to prepare them for the coming catastrophe.

In all of Yehoshua's fiction, the past is an oppressive weight, and the search, in the end, consumes the putative searchers, who melt down under the impossible pressure. Adam, in *The Lover*, is drawn inexorably to a friend of his 14-year-old daughter, forcing himself on her; Asa, the historian, finds himself humiliated by a cheap prostitute in an abandoned shop adjacent to a seedy bus station; and Yehuda, come to Israel to set himself free, meets his death in a bizarre accident at his wife's mental hospital, after he has returned in secret to steal from her the deed to their home, which he signed away to obtain his divorce.

Even those who are hardly conscious of the past—like Gavriel Mani, a middle-aged Jerusalem judge and one of six generations of Manis in *Mr. Mani*, Yehoshua's sprawling fourth novel—find themselves captive to it. It is the pressure of the past that leads Gavriel to contemplate suicide on a nightly basis in 1982, following the death of his mother: "He couldn't control this impulse he had to do away with himself every evening, because he had no reason for doing it...he only thought that he did, and even that thought wasn't his own but came from someone or somewhere else."

But that past is Yehoshua's concern. In *Mr. Mani*, a constructivist epic in reverse, he himself takes up the feverish search through history, ranging backward in time over a century and a half by way of five long conversations—each about a different Mr. Mani—in present-day Israel, 1944 Crete, 1918 Jerusalem, 1899 Poland, and 1848 Athens. Tracing the long arc of the Mani clan through murder, suicide, incest, banishment and much else besides, Yehoshua looks backward to explore the unconscious baggage the past stows with the present, charting the echoes that pass from

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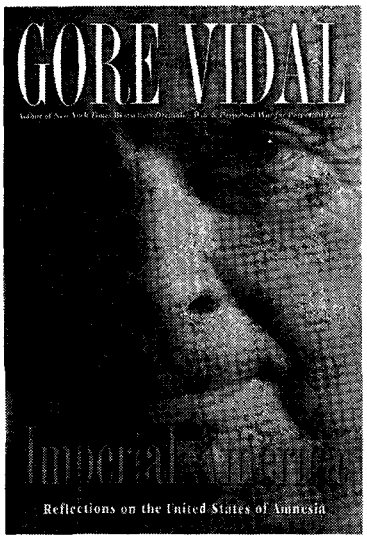

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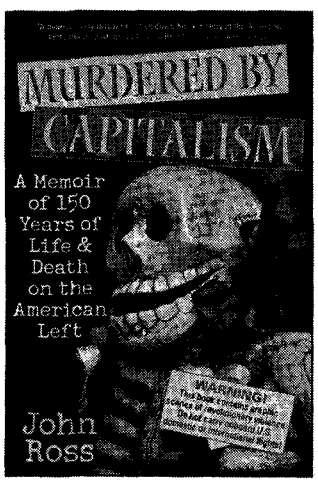

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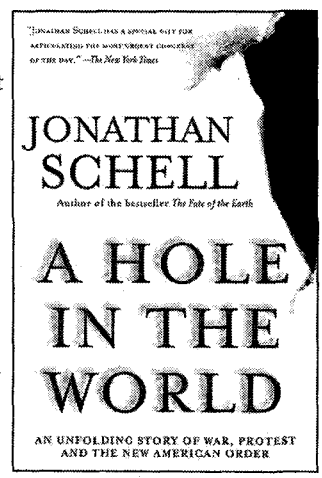
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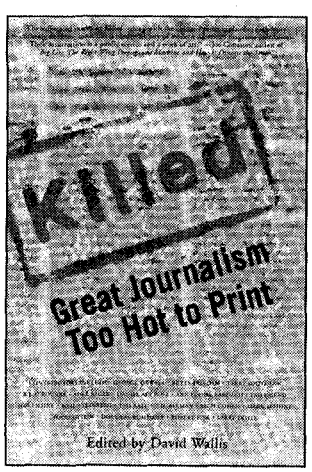

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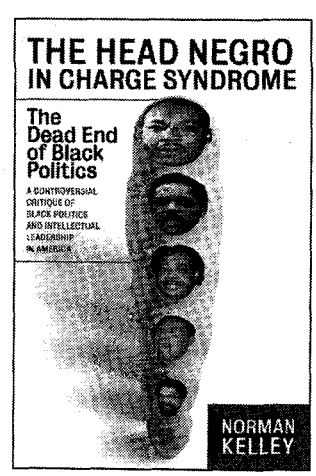

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father to son to grandson across the generations, searching through the destructive tendencies of Manis past to find the hidden source of Gavriel's urge for self-immolation. Setting the conversations at five crossroads in Jewish history—the revolutions of 1848, the Third Zionist Congress, the Balfour Declaration, the Holocaust, the Lebanon War—he takes up the mission Asa sets out in *A Late Divorce*: to uncover the secret code of the past, to seek lessons from what he calls the "failure of Jewish history."

"I wanted to understand two things," Yehoshua says, "what are the conflicts that threaten to destroy us and whether there is a way out.... To do psychoanalysis on a national level, and to try to see why we are in such a confusion now by understanding some of the elements of the past."

For Yehoshua, the failure of Jewish history—"I see the Holocaust as mainly our failure," he says—can be traced to a defect in the Jewish conception of identity, that is, the "partial identity" of Jews in the diaspora, awkwardly poised between nationhood and religion. This is the history *Mr. Mani* explores, the permutations of Jewish identity as the Manis pass into and out of Jerusalem. From Crete in 1944, a young German paratrooper tells of Efrayim Mani, who has "canceled" his Jewish identity. In Athens in 1848, Avraham Mani describes the strange ideas of his deceased son Yosef, intoxicated with the notion that the Arab residents of Palestine are Jews who have forgotten their Jewishness. In Jerusalem, 1918, a British military lawyer relates the tale of Joseph Mani, who traveled to local Arab villages, where, brandishing a copy of the newly signed Balfour Declaration, he admonished the locals, in Arabic, "Awake, before it is too late and the world is changed beyond recognition! Get ye an identity, and be quick!"

The long journey of the Manis marks Yehoshua's first sustained engagement with his own Sephardic roots, a development he ties to the death, in 1982, of his own father, an Orientalist and historian of Sephardic culture in Jerusalem. While the 1970s saw an attempt by militant Sephardic activists and intellectuals to articulate a Sephardic identity that had been deliberately repressed in the compulsive assimilation of Arab Jews who arrived in Ashkenazi-dominated Israel in the 1950s and '60s, Yehoshua vehemently resisted any Sephardic affiliation. His own Israeli identity was settled long beforehand, and the immigration, he attests, only sharpened his identification with the majority. "I fit in to Israel," he says, "like a French peasant to France."

Yehoshua's contempt for the diaspora is present in nearly all his novels, and it is a frequent subject in his nonfiction as well; he has called it "a disease" and "immoral," a "neurotic solution." While *The Lover* and *A Late Divorce* are set in motion by the return of a meddling diasporite, in *The Liberated Bride* Yehoshua gives us a lively caricature of Rivlin's sister-in-law Ofra and her husband Yo'el, who breeze through the country for a few days once or twice a year, all the while piously declaring their love for the homeland. "I'll still be Israeli," Yo'el solemnly vows, to Yehoshua's clear disgust, "even when there's no more Israel."

> The Liberated Bride *is an anxious book, a plea for 'separation' between Arab and Jew that flies in the face of the facts on the ground.*

The question of Israel's future—the shape of the state and identity of its citizens—has always haunted Yehoshua's work, and it looms especially large in *The Liberated Bride*. Identity, with which he is so evidently concerned, finds itself in Israel at the mercy of geography, and the question of where to draw the lines, or to build the walls, is at root one of demography rather than territory: who can remain inside and who will be outside. Borders and boundaries—and their violation—structure the narrative of The Liberated Bride: Ofer's eagerness to penetrate the inner circle of the hotel, which leads him to discover the incestuous relationship of his father- and sister-in-law, is the original sin that sets the book in motion. Rivlin's reckless disregard for personal and national boundaries in his own search carries the story from there.

Obsessed with sickness and its diagnosis, *The Liberated Bride* gives us Carlo Tedeschi's hypochondria, Samaher's imagined illness and a terminal ailment Rivlin invents for himself to rouse the sympathy of Galya and her family. The book's panoply of professional Orientalists, meanwhile, are preoccupied with divining the mysteries of the "Arab soul," and the maladies said to lie within; Ephraim Akri, one of Rivlin's colleagues, repeatedly expounds a Bernard Lewis–style "theory of Arab failure" (he is even summoned to an American conference on Edward Said's *Orientalism* to counter the influence of Said's disciples, who are said to be "terrorizing the academic community").

Though it would be unfair to characterize *The Liberated Bride* as fundamentally an "Orientalist" novel, that spirit permeates it nevertheless. Like Tedeschi's wife, who needs the sickness of her partner, Rivlin, with his "long-craved intimacy with the Arabs," displays a complicated attachment to their afflictions. Indeed, as Rivlin testifies after Tedeschi's death, it was his anxiety over "our inability to understand the Arab mind" that gave rise to his hypochondria. The diagnosis of Israeli society, meanwhile, is left to others: It is telling that Professor Rivlin focuses on Algeria at the expense of the situation under his nose. ("When will you write something about us?" the Palestinians in Mansura inquire.) For the French in Algeria faced then a situation not unlike the Israelis today: forced to choose between withdrawal from Algeria and the integration of Algerians into France. In the end, of course, they got both.

"We have hooked our circulatory system to that of the Palestinians," Yehoshua said with great concern in a recent interview, and *The Liberated Bride* suggests that the solution to the spreading sickness is quarantine. Separation, between lovers and nations, is the road to liberation. But *The Liberated Bride* is, above all, an anxious book, and its plea for separation—between Ofer and Galya, Carlo and Hannah, Rashid and Samaher—cannot conceal a creeping unease about the efficacy of these liberations. It is a pitch-perfect evocation of the anxiety of liberal Israelis, and returns compulsively to a deeper and more troubling issue unlikely to be resolved by even the highest "security" wall: the identity and future of Israel's more than 1 million Palestinian citizens. The book's Arab characters, after all, are themselves Israeli citizens. They have a hybrid identity; Fu'ad, the hotel's maitre d', is an "Israeli Arab, who was not yet a Jew and no longer a true son of the desert." And this partial identity, like that of the Jews in the diaspora—"they are becoming our Jews," Yehoshua says of the Palestinians—cannot but represent an existential threat to Yehoshua's conception of Zionism, which is meant to redeem the catastrophe of the diaspora through a muscular and distinct definition of Israeliness and the separation of Jews from non-Jews.

Since the publication of his first stories nine years after the founding of the state, Yehoshua has sought to represent and articulate a vision of a consolidated but complex Israeli identity that might free his people from the traps of history. The rich depictions of the Israeli everyday found in *A Late Divorce* and *Five Seasons* accomplish this just as beautifully as the explicit interrogation to which he subjects the past in his masterpiece, *Mr. Mani*. But yesterday's traps are not necessarily today's, and while Yehoshua has soldiered on, history has refused to stand still; his ardor for a complete identity exists today in stark isolation from the

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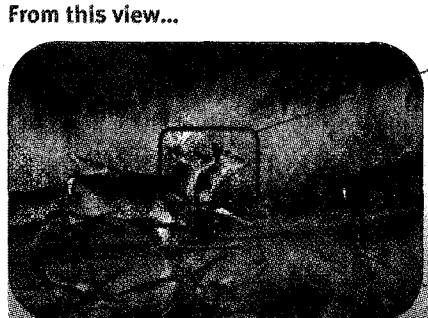

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scrambled Levantine reality. The failed policies of the last quarter-century—chief among them the settlement enterprise and its accompanying "separation" wall—have made separation less rather than more likely. With each year, each settlement, each suicide bombing and each "targeted killing," the mirrored peoples are entangled further in their bloody *mise en abyme*; the solutions to the past may be no help for the problems of the future. ■

By Any Means Necessary

MIKE MARQUSEE

THE DEACONS FOR DEFENSE: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement.
By Lance Hill. North Carolina. 363 pp. $34.95.

In June 1965 James Farmer, leader of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and longtime champion of Gandhian nonviolence, arrived in Bogalusa, Louisiana, to support a desegregation struggle in the heart of "Klan nation." Farmer had been escorted from New Orleans airport by a group of armed black men, who also stationed themselves in the hall where he spoke and watched discreetly over the march he led the next day through the town center. Pressed by reporters on his organization's links with the men with guns—members of the Deacons for Defense and Justice—Farmer was coy. "Even in the church you have your sinners: we feel we can demonstrate to these people with our philosophy of love and nonviolence that there is another way."

To many, it seemed a hopeless attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable, but in retrospect the scene exemplifies the tensions and contradictions that infused the African-American freedom struggle on the eve of the Watts riot. The initial advances of the civil rights movement had been met with a brutal wave of white terrorism. In the states of the Deep South, the federal government seemed unwilling to enforce either the new Civil Rights Act or the Constitution. It was in response to the growing sense of crisis and impotence that the Deacons emerged in mid-1964 in the pine hills of northern Louisiana. Offering a blend of armed self-defense, grassroots organizing and black pride, they rapidly attained legendary status in besieged black communities and attracted sensationalist coverage in the white media. Their meteoric career—by 1968 they had vanished from the scene—spanned a watershed in the movement's history, when, according to some versions, the idealism and unity of the nonviolent phase gave way to extremism, bitterness and factionalism.

Mike Marqusee's most recent book is Chimes of Freedom: The Politics of Bob Dylan's Art *(New Press).*

That schema has always been a tendentious political construct, and the remarkable tale of the Deacons for Defense illustrates just how artificial it is. Lance Hill's book is the first full account of the group and fills a major lacuna in the history of the era and the movement. It is also a welcome corrective to the school of civil rights historians who try to fix this multipronged, protean movement into the static polarities of nonviolence and violence, liberal integrationism and radical separatism.

As Hill notes, even before the advent of the Deacons, defensive violence was by no means alien to the movement. In Monroe, North Carolina, Robert Williams had transformed his local NAACP branch into an armed self-defense unit, for which transgression he was denounced by the NAACP and hounded by the federal government (he found asylum in Cuba). More typically, efforts to provide physical protection for movement leaders and activists were discreet and unaccompanied by ideological claims. Devotees of nonviolence in CORE and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—and indeed Martin Luther King Jr. himself—were all aware that many of the local activists with whom they worked carried guns, and they often quietly accepted the protection these guns afforded. Fannie Lou Hamer, the eloquently blunt Mississippi militant who outraged LBJ at the 1964 Democratic convention, confessed that she kept several loaded guns under her bed.

In 1964, as part of the Freedom Summer project, CORE sent volunteers into the paper-mill town of Jonesboro in northern Louisiana. As elsewhere, the sudden appearance in their midst of activists challenging a long-entrenched system of white supremacy, yet committed to a creed of nonviolence, created a predicament for local people, who knew just how ferocious the white reaction to the CORE workers would be. A small group led by mill worker and Korean War veteran Earnest "Chilly Willy" Thomas took it upon themselves to act as armed sentinels outside CORE's Freedom House. At the same time, high school teacher Fred Kirkpatrick persuaded the police to allow him to set up an auxiliary black volunteer police force. Both hoped to provide some physical protection for the CORE activists and for local black residents as they undertook their first organized challenge to Jim Crow.

In response to CORE-led protests against Jonesboro's segregated library and swimming pool, the Klan, with the aid of local police, drove a fifty-car caravan through the midst of the town's black quarter. Soon after, twenty black men met in a union hall to discuss the organization of community defense. Among them were Kirkpatrick's police auxiliaries and Thomas's sentinels. In the months that followed they adopted a formal structure, a set of aims and a name—all of which flew in the face of the code of discretion and anonymity that had governed previous efforts at armed self-defense.

With CB radios and walkie-talkies, the newly formed Deacons for Defense patrolled the black community. Numbers at the nonviolent demonstrations grew rapidly. In December, the protesters succeeded in integrating the library, the first victory for the movement in Jonesboro. When the Klan set crosses ablaze in retaliation, the Deacons issued a leaflet threatening to kill anyone burning a cross in the black community, and then arranged to have the leaflets left at white homes by black domestic workers.

In early 1965 black students picketing the local high school were confronted by hostile police who called in a firetruck to hose them down. A car pulled up, four Deacons emerged and in view of the police calmly loaded their shotguns. The police ordered the firetruck to retreat. "For the first time in the twentieth century," Hill observes, "an armed black organization had successfully used weapons to defend a lawful protest against an attack by law enforcement." Fearing a repetition of the widely publicized violence in Selma, Alabama, the segregationist Louisiana governor intervened; town leaders were forced to accede to the black community's demands.

Bogalusa, in the southeastern corner of the state, was the site of the Deacons' next major undertaking, and here too their emer-

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gence and activity were intertwined with a nonviolent campaign initiated by CORE. When local police, in cahoots with the Klan, tried to scare two white CORE volunteers out of the black community, a posse of gun-toting black men turned up on the scene to protect the two pacifists. It was another white CORE activist who set up a meeting between the Bogalusa people and the Jonesboro Deacons. "You got to forget about *right*, because *right* ain't gonna get you justice," Kirkpatrick advised the Bogalusa group. Thomas told them the Deacons had grenades and automatic weapons (an exaggeration). "The man gonna think twice before he moves, 'cause he knows he done moved on the devil."

Charlie Sims became president of the Bogalusa Deacons. With twenty-one arrests and a reputation for carrying a blackjack in one pocket and a loaded pistol in the other, this 41-year-old World War II veteran would never be confused with the students and clergymen popularly identified as the movement's leaders. Like others, Sims had been roused to action by the spectacle of white cops attacking defenseless black women and children on the picket line. The onetime gambler and hustler proved an articulate and disarming spokesman for the Deacons, mingling menace and charm, veiled threats of violent retribution with the most moderate demands for fair treatment.

Though abandoned by federal government and local authorities to Klan terror, the Bogalusa movement waged a spirited campaign, boycotting white businesses and defying hate-spewing white mobs to march repeatedly through the town center. In June the Klan murdered a recently hired black policeman. No one was prosecuted for the crime.

On July 8 a nonviolent black march to city hall was surrounded by hundreds of stone-throwing whites. After a tussle, one member of the Deacons found himself pinned against a car door and menaced by the inflamed white crowd. Another Deacon, Henry Austin, a 21-year-old insurance salesman and Air Force vet, pulled out a .38 and stepped in front of the mob. He fired a warning shot in the air, to no effect. He then fired three shots into the chest of one of the advancing white attackers. The victim survived, and perhaps more amazingly so did Austin, but the social terrain in which the Bogalusa movement unfolded was transformed. In the days following the shooting, the white mobs disappeared. The Klan was confined to conducting terror raids by night and in small bands. The federal government, which had ignored the murder of the black policeman, final-

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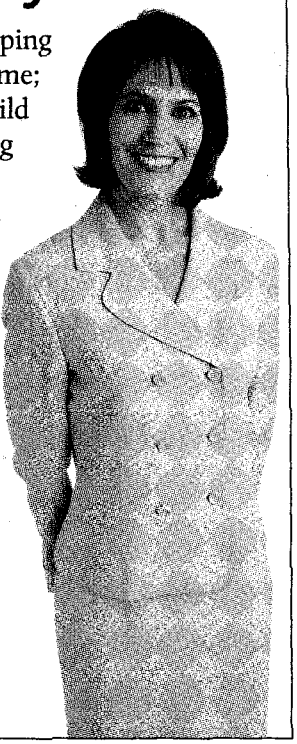

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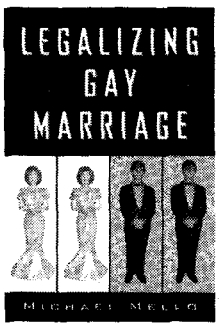

Michael Mello
Foreword by David Chambers

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ly intervened, commencing legal action against both the Klan and city officials. "Overnight, Washington crushed the white supremacist coup in Bogalusa and forced local authorities to uphold the law," Hill observes. "In retrospect, what is remarkable was how *little* was required to destroy the Klan and force local authorities to protect citizens' rights and liberties. The Federal government did nothing more than threaten city officials with modest fines and light jail sentences." That minimal effort, it seems, was made only after blacks had begun to meet force with force.

Later, the Deacons provided essential muscle for Charles Evers's uncompromising (and ultimately successful) desegregation campaign in Natchez, Mississippi, as well as discreet security for the 1966 march through the state led by James Meredith. By then, there were Deacons branches in twenty-one communities. Thomas and Sims sought to spread their organization to the cities of the North and West but failed; the particular conditions that gave birth to the Deacons and made their tactics effective did not exist outside the South.

Hill has done a service by rescuing the Deacons from oblivion. But in staking their claims, he sometimes oversimplifies and underestimates the larger movement from which they emerged. In the context of Southern society in the late 1950s and early '60s, nonviolent direct action represented a bold and innovative break from the past. It challenged the fatalism and political quiescence of the black church as well as the snail's-pace legalism of the liberals. It was designed to discomfit and disturb, and for those who took part, it was anything but passive. And for the whites whose assumptions and privileges it challenged, it was nothing less than an extremist provocation. To demand, however nonviolently, a seat at a lunch counter or a library was tantamount to a public assault on an entrenched caste order—which was why the reaction was obdurate and violent.

It has been said that nonviolence stresses the primacy of means and self-defense the primacy of ends. Both propositions are flawed. Nonviolence was often adopted because of its efficacy rather than its moral purity, while armed self-defense served a psychological and symbolic function as much as a pragmatic one. Hill argues that in taking up arms, the Deacons offered a much-needed symbol of "black manhood," one that altered the consciousness of both blacks and whites and overthrew the ancient stereotype of black submissiveness. Both nonviolence and armed self-defense illustrated the power of symbolic action in social struggles—and its limitations. After the Deacons, armed resistance increasingly replaced nonviolence as a magical mantra, a key to unlocking the latent power of the black masses. The claims of "redemptive suffering" were pushed aside by the (equally mystical) claims of redemptive aggression. Detached from a mass movement and a political strategy, neither could be more than gestures.

In assessing the contributions of the Deacons or other agents in the African-American freedom struggle, it's important to bear in mind two defining characteristics of major social movements. First, as the word implies, they are in motion (when they cease to be in motion, they either vanish or become institutionalized). Second, they are composite. It was the shifting interaction of the civil rights movement's diverse strands and strategies that drove it forward. In the Deacons' story, one finds judicial actions alongside nonviolent pickets and armed sentries; local grassroots initiatives alongside national campaigns; appeals to liberal values mixed with assertions of black pride and self-reliance; color-blind constitutionalism and racially autonomous insurgency; negotiation and confrontation.

This is not to say that all the varying elements in the movement were of equal weight or to deny the need to assess strategic and tactical options. What the story of the Deacons confirms is that in movements that truly shake the world, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. For historians, as for activists, precise assessment and hard choices have to be made, but they are best made within this larger ecumenical reality. ■

Advise and Consent

SCOTT MALCOMSON

THE BREAKING OF NATIONS. By Robert Cooper. Atlantic Monthly. 180 pp. $18.95.

Foreign policy is that rare field in which essay-writing matters. From George Kennan's 1947 article explaining containment and John Foster Dulles's 1954 essay defining "massive retaliation," through Jeane Kirkpatrick's 1979 "Dictatorships and Double Standards," and on to the cold war cappers by Francis Fukuyama ("The End of History?" 1989) and Samuel Huntington ("The Clash of Civilizations?" 1993), policy essays have made a difference. It is a curious genre, proudly given to overgeneralization and the imposition of dubious categories on large, sometimes very large, populations, and invariably light on detail and qualifying arguments. (The post-essay is another story; Kennan spent decades re-explaining containment and challenging the policies of many who embraced it.) Sacrificing exactness, the form seeks to give existing worldviews a big shove, so that the novelty of a given period may be thrown into bold relief. Actual daily politics and policy-making are exceedingly detail-oriented and cautious, and when people in those worlds try to step back for a moment they need to step way back. That is what essays like these make possible. Yet because they generalize so broadly, they leave plenty of room for error. The containment doctrine famously ignored the appeal of nationalism in the Third World.

In his influential 2002 essay "Power and Weakness," Robert Kagan discussed the impending war on Iraq to illuminate differences between the United States and Europe. He did not talk much about Iraq itself, and given the postwar disasters this looks like a serious omission—not altogether unlike Kennan's omission of nationalism. Robert Cooper's *The Breaking of Nations* also leaves out a great deal, and if it had been written by someone other than Cooper one might dismiss it as entirely too wacky. But Cooper, Tony Blair's foreign policy guru from 1999 to last year and now a senior adviser at the European Union, is a man whose opinions count, and his book falls into the same tradition of imperial advice-giving as Kennan's containment essay and Kirkpatrick's defense of embracing friendly authoritarians. By reading Cooper, we can better understand the intellectual and ideological underpinnings of Britain's prime minister, whose decision to support the war in Iraq was as deeply unpopular at home as it was admired in Washington. And we can better understand European security policy.

Scott Malcomson is an editor at The New York Times Magazine. *He is the author of, most recently,* One Drop of Blood *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and a former adviser to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.*

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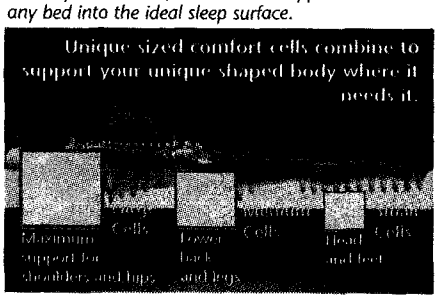
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Blair needed someone like Cooper to articulate the liberal imperialism Blair sees as necessary to the post–cold war order and to the Anglo-American alliance. This position is suspect in England, where foreign adventuring inspires more alarm than pride and people are rightly skeptical of the Bush Administration's intentions. Cooper is Blair's Robert Kagan, but because he is a Blairite and not a neocon, he believes in Atlanticism and soft power; he feels that even imperial powers need the consent of their subjects, and that force alone is bound to fail.

Cooper's view of the world—one divided among successful, modern states (like the United States), a postmodern bloc (unified Europe) and chaotic, premodern states in need of imperial tutelage if not a good pre-emptive invasion—is hardly appetizing. At the least, he seems eager to license further adventures like the invasion of Iraq. Yet we ignore arguments like his at our peril. There is a genuine idealism to Cooper's (and Blair's) project, and both he and Blair insist that their support of liberal empire is a continuation of the Clinton doctrine, not a capitulation to Bush Administration radicals. Some liberals, nostalgic for Clinton, may find this unpalatable, but it is a point worth taking seriously (and has been made by, among others, the Marxist historian Perry Anderson in *New Left Review*). As long as Blairism remains in place, it is this vision that will shape British foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East.

Educated in Nairobi, then at Oxford, Cooper was number two at the Bonn embassy when John Major was proving just how muddled Tories can be when contemplating the Continent. Cooper returned to London for a brief turn as director-general for Asia, then was tapped to be head of the Defense and Overseas Secretariat, which is to say, Blair's principal foreign policy adviser. Blair has empowered such figures as part of his attempts at so-called presidentialization. This is particularly relevant in British foreign policy because, to a degree in Kosovo and abundantly in Iraq, that has been Blair's main point of departure from British public opinion.

Cooper first came to prominence with his 1996 essay "The Postmodern State and the World Order," updated several times and now serving as the first (and longest) of three parts in *The Breaking of Nations*. The essay described unified Europe as having achieved the highest-known form of political organization, ahead of the United States, other modern states and an extensive "jungle" of luckless premoderns. Six years later, he published a short piece in an immodestly titled collection, *Reordering the World: The Long-Term Implications of September 11*. The London *Observer* ran it as "The New Liberal Imperialism" (Cooper incorporates it here into his first part). The article bears being quoted at length, because it encapsulates many of Cooper's chief ideas, which are becoming part of the mainstream—and because he left Blair's office last year to serve as chief adviser to the EU's high representative for common foreign and security policy, Javier Solana, for whom he has drafted Europe's very first Security Strategy.

The fundamental problem of the post–cold war order, Cooper wrote, is that a "large number of the most powerful states no longer want to fight or conquer. It is this that gives rise to both the premodern and postmodern worlds. Imperialism in the traditional sense is dead, at least among the Western powers." Nontraditional imperialism may be a different matter. Cooper sees a critical role for European (as well as American) military power and, less clearly, other forms of power that would not look good in court or a newspaper: "The challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and open, cooperative security. Among ourselves we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle. In the prolonged period of peace in Europe, there has been a temptation to neglect our defences, both physical and psychological. This represents one of the great dangers of the postmodern state." Cooper goes on to ask:

> How should we deal with the pre-modern chaos?... The most logical way to deal with chaos, and the one most employed in the past, is colonisation. Today, there are no colonial powers willing to take on the job, though the opportunities, perhaps even the need for colonisation, is as great as it ever was in the nineteenth century. Those left out of the global economy risk falling into a vicious circle. Weak government means disorder and that means falling investment.... What is needed then is a new kind of imperialism, one acceptable to a world of human rights and cosmopolitan values...an imperialism which, like all imperialism, aims to bring order and organisation but which rests today on the voluntary principle. Postmodern imperialism takes two forms. First, there is the voluntary imperialism of the global economy. This is usually operated by an international consortium through International Financial

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> Institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.... The second form of post-modern imperialism might be called the imperialism of neighbours.... But Usama bin Laden has now demonstrated for those who had not already realised, that today all the world is, potentially at least, our neighbour.

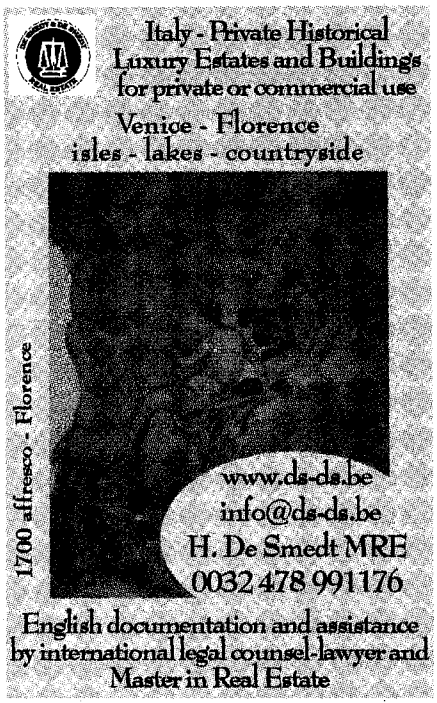
All this will be familiar to readers of Robert Kagan, although Cooper supplies a few twists of his own. Both are preoccupied with the coherence of the West, a coherence they identify with the future endurance of what Kagan calls, without defining them, "common Western beliefs" and "aspirations for humanity." Both identify the reasons for the Atlantic split in the hope of ending it. In practical terms, both advocate a European defense force. But neither (Kagan least) truly seems to believe in it much, partly because the Euro-American military-capability gap is so extreme, as Cooper shows at some length—and because both know that Europeans simply do not, and probably will not, see the dangers that many Americans see. And even when they do, they may not see battle and the threat of battle as appropriate responses—as witness the Spanish vote against José María Aznar after the Madrid bombings. Solana's European Security Strategy emphasizes the combination of civilian with military "capabilities," noting, this is an area where "we could add particular value."

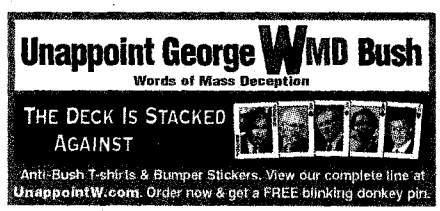
So it seems that Europe will continue to be Greece to America's Rome, to use the metaphor that preceded Kagan's "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus." (Speaking of essays, an awful lot of this was anticipated in "Among the Euro-Weenies," by P.J. O'Rourke, which appeared in *Rolling Stone* in 1986 but has never entered the policy canon.) The trans-Atlantic rift then will heal, equilibrium between hard and soft power will be restored, the stick will lie down with the carrot and "the widows of Clinton will find consolation," as Perry Anderson has put it, drawing out the continuities between the humanitarian interventions of Clinton and the regime changes of Bush. It remains to be seen whether the "neocon moment" is the end of the line or a bridge to some more muscular Clintonism-without-Clinton (and perhaps without Blair?), fortified by whatever Iraq lessons the next President cares to draw. Reading Cooper, one is at least reminded that Blair has been able to reconcile, without too much trouble, both the Bush and Clinton worldviews.

That may be because those worldviews are not as far apart as some of us imagine. The ideals expressed in Bush's National Security Strategy are not far from Clinton's. They form what Condoleezza Rice (who was lead author on the NSS) calls Bush's "idealism," the implications of which are being tested by Kagan and Cooper. The idealism question is a critical one, for it is bound up with how Western leaders and their advisers shape their use of power. One interesting aspect of how both Kagan and Cooper handle this business of idealism is their wariness of institutions, existing or projected. It is not simply a matter of doubting the United Nations. From NATO to the WTO to the ICC, they show little interest in the world institutions that are meant to advance worldviews. The only transnational institution that truly excites either man is the European Union, which is presented more as a supernation, a manifestation of the European *Geist*—a synthesis of successes built on the Continent's spectacular failures, in particular the pervasive failures of the fascist period. On the global plane, they see the European Union very much as the brother superstate to the United States.

With a combined population of more than 700 million and all the capital and technology a hegemon could want, the European Union and United States make quite a pair. But what unites them? Neither Cooper nor Kagan is helpful on this crucial point. Vague allusions to shared beliefs and aspirations are not sufficient; and despite them, Kagan nearly convinces you that "the West" is just too twentieth century anyway. He believes Europeans, habituated by the cold war decades, see their role on the world stage as to restrain or, more euphemistically, to multilateralize American power; in a sense, to make American power universal. By contrast, most Americans do not think they need Europe to act as a trainer, universalizer or finishing school for American power. The internationalism of Americans, he writes, "has always been a by-product of their nationalism. When Americans sought legitimacy for their actions abroad, they sought it not from supranational institutions but from their own principles. That is why it was always so easy for so many Americans to believe, as so many still believe today, that by advancing their own interests they advance the interests of humanity."

The West, for Americans, is an American idea, and not the most important one. I don't particularly like it, but I think Kagan is mostly right on this point: Most Americans believe that our national advancement and human advancement are roughly synonymous. Certainly no other nation today can combine provincialism and universal mission with the élan that the United States

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brings to the task. Whatever imperialism Americans come up with, it will be American. Like most non-Europeans, Americans do not see "legitimacy" as something Europeans can confer.

This is a reality I think Europeans have trouble grasping. Cooper himself writes that, ideally, the postmodern world (namely Europe) might extend "ever wider, so that eventually it became the norm for relations between countries to be governed by law and negotiation, so that domestic and foreign policies became intertwined and identities fused into a sense of a wider international community." If becoming part of the "international community" means becoming European, as Cooper appears to believe, then neither Americans nor many other peoples outside the European Union are likely to join. This is not a small problem. The need to invigorate multilateral institutions is apparent to governments around the world—including, yes, the current Administration in Washington. Some leadership must come from the United States and Europe. But if such leadership is offered in terms of "spreading civilization" or postmodern imperialism, it is unlikely to achieve much, even if the United States and European Union are able to get their currently competing vanities in sync and revive the West for a new generation.

On the contrary, such an approach fuels hostility and lessens the likelihood that states and peoples outside the West will work to meld their interests in some larger system. The breakdown of the World Trade Organization's "development round" in Cancún last year resulted from just such hostility. Weapons proliferation feeds on it. "Repetitive and sterile debates" and "lowest common denominator" voting patterns in the UN General Assembly—the phrases are from Secretary General Kofi Annan—indicate the inability of many states to achieve a productive multilateralism, just as the changeless structure of the Security Council, so "at odds with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century" (Annan again), shows that the great powers of 1945 should not preach too much to others about governance reform. Multilateralism faces threats from every side, but probably the greatest threat is overconfidence in the West that only the West really matters. If the "international community" cannot be delinked, somehow, from Western *amour-propre*, it's hard to see how it will survive. It would be good if such experienced and influential thinkers as Cooper and Kagan were to turn their abilities to the task. ■

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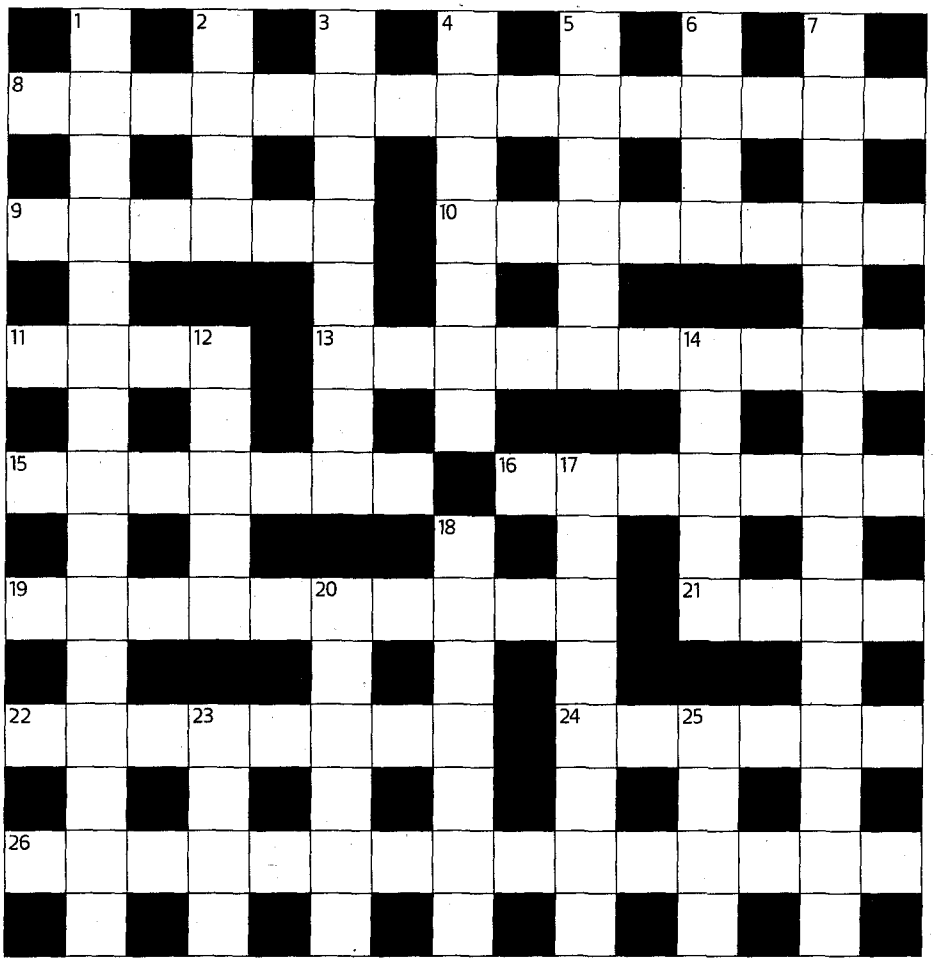

ACROSS

8 One hears that some sort of tune is being made for the seat of government in England—possibly by the Prince of Wales. (4,2,3,6)

9 and **11** Starts to look shabby, as the farmer does when he walks out with things that should bring forth fruit. (4,2,4)

10 One wouldn't want the plane in this, but the children at parties might do it on the donkey, in reverse. (8)

11 See 9

13 One's former spouse, over in Frankfort, has a poor seat but seems to be very happy. (10)

15 There's a point to what the victors do, before his sort becomes somewhat like Porky. (7)

16 What baseball players cherish in their stats, is back-up to those with a good thing at the track. (3-4)

19 One who seems to have a burning desire, or many I find in headgear turned backwards. (10)

21 It's a crooked lane you might take with quite a show of spirit. (4)

22 The watchman's cry also says that everything's with a surge. (4,4)

24 If this gets said, it's a final comment. (6)

26 Stories of dramatic rescue might show where nest eggs lie. (7,8)

DOWN

1 Using the windshield wiper might help one do it, and have no qualms. (3,4,3,5)

2 A master of this probably graduated from college in a starburst! (4)

3 The soda water seems to be about finished, but there's something left to eat. (8)

4 When someone like a Samurai has a well-known model at heart, one might get fired. (7)

5 A third one adds to the 16 across, unless it's the sit-down kind. (6)

6 Acts like a real human being, as they say. (4)

7 Drawers to them are supposedly recklessly foolish. (6,9)

12 One is wild, but makes the noise disappear. (5)

14 and **23** A spoken word of warning, as has been mentioned earlier. (9)

17 Relative to a Southern state, has started to loosen the grasp. (8)

18 Not much protection for the overly modest, but it bears fruit with extension to the table. (3,4)

20 The anchors might be gone, by the sound of it. (6)

23 See 14

25 Though it's a singular version of the opera, it might be in the soup! (4)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

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W	■	A	■	G	■	S	■	O	■	B	■	A	■	O
A	L	I	M	O	N	Y	■	F	R	E	E	B	I	D
R	■	S	■	M	■	N	■	F	■	A	■	I	■	G
D	I	S	M	A	N	T	L	E	■	M	A	T	T	E
S	■	O	■	N	■	H	■	N	■	■	■	U	■	R
■	A	N	N	I	V	E	R	S	A	R	I	E	S	■
■	■	■	■	A	■	T	■	I	■	E	■	■	■	■
■	M	I	S	C	H	I	E	V	O	U	S	L	Y	■
A	■	N	■	■	■	C	■	E	■	T	■	U	■	B
R	E	S	E	T	■	A	U	N	A	T	U	R	E	L
T	■	T	■	O	■	L	■	E	■	E	■	K	■	A
F	R	O	N	T	A	L	■	S	O	R	T	I	E	S
U	■	C	■	A	■	Y	■	S	■	E	■	N	■	E
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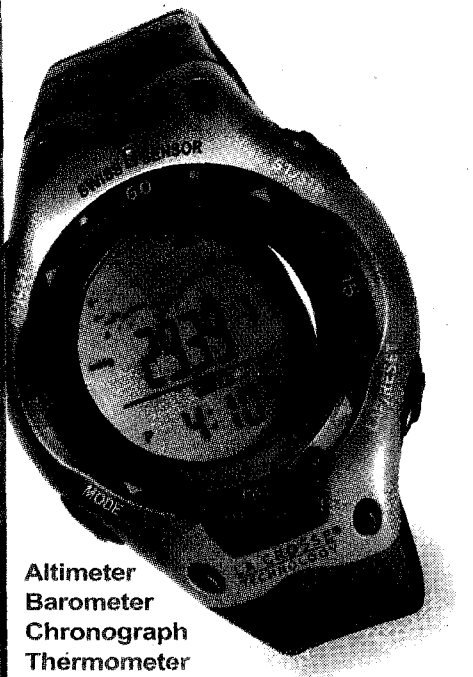

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